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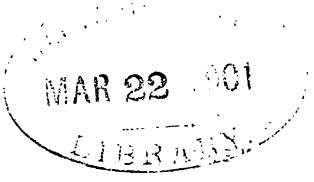

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PREFACE

THE following papers, with the exception of the first and the last, have been delivered in the form of lectures—that on John Keats in aid of the building fund of the Wick Public Library, and the others under the auspices of the "Shetland Literary and Scientific Society."

D. J. M.

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FLORENTIUS VOLUSENUS

ALTHOUGH it is not quite an ascertained fact, there can be little doubt that it was somewhere in the sunny levels which lie between the old cathedral city of Elgin and the sea that, about the year 1500, Florentius Volusenus was born, *parentibus ingenuis.*[1] And it is one of the most beautiful features in his character that, long years after, when he had wandered far through England, France, and Italy, and had been the protégé, successively, of four cardinals—Wolsey, Du Bellay, Lorraine, and Sadoleto—he should return in spirit, as, but for premature death, he would have done in body, to the "Laich of Moray," where the fruit trees ripened early, where the gentle Lossie, "*lucidus et vadosus*," mirrored the great eastern window of the "Lanthorn of the North," and where the palace walls of Spynie rose from their shimmering loch that was "haunted by wild swans." His friend, George Buchanan, has paid eloquent tribute to the peculiar charm of that region—a charm which is perhaps less known

1 Volusenus has had many biographers. Dr. Irving in his "Lives of Scottish Writers," has related almost every fact known about him; and, among other lives, may be mentioned a most interesting monograph printed many years ago by a respected member of a literary society in the town of his birth.

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than it should be even by the south-country Scotsman, who may be astonished to learn that, "at the back of the north wind," there lies a province that is earlier in its season than regions much nearer the sun. George Buchanan (whose Hebrew Lexicon lies in the Edinburgh University Library with this autograph on it, "Georgius Buchananus. Ex munificentia Florentii Voluseni") bears testimony to the amenities of the province of Moray—to its mild skies, its rich pastures, and its wealth of fruits. Bishop Lesley, too, who was a contemporary of our author, tells of its meadows and wheat fields, frequent groves, sweet-smelling wild flowers, and teeming apple gardens, over all which lay a sky whose breezes were healthful and whose clouds were rare.

Amid such scenes the philosopher of tranquillity was born. There are some difficulties, however, in connection with the next notable event, namely, his christening. It may seem absurd to confess that the very name of our hero is a matter of doubt, but such, unfortunately, is the case. One thing is certain, viz., that he called himself, and was known in the learned world as, Florentius Voluzenus or Volusenus. This, of course, was a Latinised version of his surname, adopted in accordance with the usage of the authors of his day. But a Latinised version of what? Some suggest Wolsey, some Wilson. Awkwardly, however, for both, Florence himself signs a letter, written in the pure venacular, "Florence Voluzene," and a French contemporary calls him Volusen. No such name, so far as we are aware, occurs in this country; and the nearest to it is certainly Wilson,

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which, in old French, was Vulson. Moreover, as some of his biographers have remarked, Florence had doubtless become so thoroughly identified with his *nom de plume* that he kept as close to it as possible, even when, for the time, he had dropped his Latinity. That families of the name of Wilson did reside in the district which Florence has described as that of his boyhood, we learn from the rent-roll of the Bishop of Moray in 1565, where there are two Wilsons mentioned as paying rent in the neighbourhood of Spynie, one of whom is described as "archicoquus," whatever that may have been.

Florence Wilson, for so we shall call him, entered on boyhood at a time when grave events and great men made the history and the society of Scotland peculiarly interesting. The clear-headed, but sumptuous, and quixotic king was beginning to draw away from his brother-in-law of England and to bind himself closer to France. In the north-east there was extensive commerce with continental ports; the Scottish fleet was powerful and efficient; the turbulent spirits of the Highlands were being gradually brought into subjection; it was but the pause before the storm that reached its terrible catastrophe on Flodden field.

The learning and literature of Scotland had reached one of its highest levels. William Dunbar was singing to his royal master of a nightingale—

> "With sugared notis new,
> Whose angel feathers as the peacock shone;
> This was her song, and of a sentence true—
> All love is lost but upon God alone,"

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Gavin Douglas was busy with his Scottish "Æneid," and Henrysoun, the poet-schoolmaster of Dunfermline, had just passed away—he who had sung—

> "Blissed be simple life withouten dreid;
> Blissed be sober feast in quiete."

That Wilson's boyhood was a studious and happy one there can be little doubt. We may imagine him spelling out his first lessons in the "General School," as it was called, of Elgin, and filling his boyish mind with a deep love and reverence for the great church whose presence dominated all the little world in which he moved; in whose long aisles he first shaped to himself the desire for tranquillity, and whose jewelled glass and flowering stone unquestionably elevated, softened, and refined a spirit which needed such influences less than most. There lay, too, within the field of his experience the stately society of a cathedral town—the bishop and his chapter, the preachers, and deacons, and all the dignitaries and paraphernalia of a great ecclesiastical centre. We may believe, too, that with his great love of natural scenery, he may often have wandered far on idle afternoons—with young John Ogilvie or another—up the garden-like valley where, in a hollow of the hill, the brown tower of Pluscarden rose over its marvellous fruit trees; northwards to where, on the yellow sand flats, broke the clear green sea, and, beyond it, across the horizon, lay the majestic mountain line of the Sutherland and Caithness hills; or along by the cave-hollowed, gull-haunted cliffs, till, towards evening, the sound might reach him of the three great bells of

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Kinloss—Mary, Anna, and Jerome—("magni ponderis nec minus sonorae") mingling their call to lauds with the plangent voices of the sea.

It is worth noticing that in the year 1506 a great and singular catastrophe had occurred in connection with Elgin Cathedral. The great central tower in that year suddenly fell, crushing and maiming the beautiful building beneath it. Bishop Foreman, with characteristic activity, at once began to rebuild the tower, which, however, was not finished till 1538, when the spire was completed at a height of 198 feet. This incident must have formed almost the starting point in Wilson's childish recollections, and throughout his knowledge of the cathedral, it was probably in the hands of builders and restorers.

An incident which Florence relates in his chief work, although it refers to a slightly later period—when he had finished his studies in Aberdeen, and was preparing for that vague voyage into the unknown world that so many poor young Scotsmen have taken—still may find a fitting place here, as it shows us the early bent of his genius. "Many years ago," he says, "before I came over into France, as I and John Ogilvie, who is now in the Scotch Church at Cruden, a man of distinguished family, and polished alike in manners and learning, sauntered together (for we were close companions) along the banks of the river Lossie, the first of Horace's Satires—for he had Horace in his hand—

'Qui fit Maecenas, ut nemo,' &c.,

led us into talking one to the other of the storms and

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troubles of this human life." Ogilvie, who seems to have been the younger of the two, turning to Wilson, prays him to shed some light on these questionings for their friendship's sake. "Come back to-morrow," he says, "if you love me. Come back here when the sun begins to fall. I will expect you here, on this bank, and meantime, you will consult all your philosophers, and will be able to tell me truly whether it is to ourselves alone, or the wrongness of things in general (vitio rerum), that the pain of the life-struggle is due." Of Wilson's philosophy, and the dream that came to him when he had bidden Ogilvie goodbye and gone home to rest and think, we shall have to speak again.

It is worth while pausing a moment to remark that philosophy, and the resultant tranquillity of soul, were peculiarly needed in Scottish country society in the sixteenth century. Not only were life and property less secure than in our day, but the law itself was administered with a terrible severity. We have preserved to us by the Spalding Club, the register of the Regality Court of Spynie at a later period of the same century, and the picture it presents of violent crime and merciless punishment is one which we recoil from in dismay notwithstanding the quaint and curious pen with which it is drawn. We need hardly explain that a Regality was a feudal jurisdiction of the highest kind granted by the Crown to a subject, including both civil matters and the trial of all crimes, with the exception of treason. The whole lands of the Church in Moray were erected into a Regality in 1452, over which the Bishop held sway. After the Reformation, these powers and the

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title of Lord Spynie were given by James VI. to Sir Alexander Lindsay by a letter dated "From the castell of Croneburg quhaire we are drinking and dryving ou'r in the auld manner." The Court, which was generally held in the "Jewale Hous'" or "Chepdour of the Cathedrale Kirk of Murraye" (the most perfect fragment now remaining of these magnificent ruins), and sometimes "upon the Water Syd of Lossie," was presided over by the bailie of the Regality, and the proceedings were seemingly conducted with great precision and formality. The register is throughout accompanied by marginial notes such as "convict," "acquytis," "hangit," "drownit," "heidit." Theft, often accompanied by violence, was very common. The first recorded case of hanging was for being "ane common stelar of scheip furth of the haill countrey about ye." A man and his wife were indicted for the "thifteous steling and consaling of twa scheip," and it is set forth that when the officer went to search the house, "thy wyf reife the officiar's handis and claithis and vald nocht lat him daker the suspect places of the hous." This officer, however, persisted, and succeeded in discovering various signs of the lost sheep, "togidder with four quhyt scheipis feit and four black scheipis feit upon the veschell buird, togidder with ane quarter muttone under the almarie." "As alswa thou, the said Christiane, ran away with sum soddin muttoun in thy bosom quhilk thy nychtbouris saw." This unfortunate couple were condemned "to be tane to Lossye and thair to be drownit quhill thai be deid." A man convicted of murder was sentenced to be "taikin to the water syd of

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Lossye, and there his heid to be strickin from him." For various acts of theft, including the "ressait of the half of ane broune cw," William Roy was condemned "to be had to the gallows beyond the Bischopmiln and thair to be hangit quhill he be deid."

Against a background such as this, it is pleasing to contemplate the figures of these slim young students wandering by the green holms and winding river margins, and searching in Horatian numbers for some answer to "the riddle of the painful earth."

But we must follow Wilson to Aberdeen. His biographies agree that it was in the newly founded University of that town that he laid the foundation of the learning which, later on, so much astonished the polished Sadoleto. It was indeed into a brilliant circle that the thoughtful boy was received. Some twenty years before, Bishop Elphinstone had obtained from the Pope powers for the constitution of a University, and it was not long before his conspicuous energy and zeal had not only raised the material fabric, part of which between its grey buttresses still shelters the learning of the north from the wild sea winds, but had gathered around him some of the choicest spirits of that great age. Elphinstone had been educated at the College of Montaigu in Paris, and it was but natural that his first teachers should be drawn from the same source. Hector Boyce, or Boetius, the distinguished humanist, the correspondent of Erasmus and the historian of Scotland, was the first principal. Associated with him were William Hay, another Parisian student, John Vaus, the grammarian, and Arthur Boyce, the Principal's

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brother, distinguished in civil and canon law, and who eventually became a Lord of Session. That there was considerable intercourse between this seat of learning and the ecclesiastical society of Elgin cannot be doubted when we remember that the precentor of Elgin Cathedral wrote the introductory epistle to Boyce's History, and that the Archdeacon of Moray, John Bellenden, translated that history into Scottish prose, that Ferrerius, some years later, was working in the same field in the Abbey of Kinloss, and that the Bishop of Moray was the clever and intriguing Forman, on whose shoulders has been laid the guilt of the fatal war with England, a man no less able in his way than the enlightened prelate of Aberdeen.

With regard to Wilson's finding means to go to Aberdeen a suggestion occurs to us. Had the "archi-coquus" anything to do with it? Was he an elder brother, and in the Bishop's service at the Palace of Spynie, round which Florence's early memories seem to have hovered, and concerning which we shall have further suggestions to make?

Of Elphinstone himself, we have a charming picture presented to us by Boyce.[1] "He was most splendid in the maintenance of his establishment, seldom sitting down to dinner without a great company of guests of the gentry, and always with a well furnished table. In the midst of such temptations, he himself abstemious, but cheerful in aspect, gay in conversation, took great delight in the arguments of the learned, in music, and n decent wit; all ribaldry he detested. He had talent

1 Spalding Club, "Fasti Aberdon."

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and energy for any business of public or private life, and could adapt himself equally to civil or church affairs. He seemed of iron frame. . . . In his eighty-third year, he discussed the weighty affairs of State more acutely than any man." One of the most striking features in the bishop's character was that of his "energy for any business." It will scarcely be believed that, in the midst of the hopes, and labours, and anxieties of establishing a great seat of learning, this extraordinary man found time to plan and commence the carrying out of one of the greatest public works of his time.

"This was the bridge our Dee
Which every man may mark;
Ane needful most, expensive great,
A good and gallant wark;
Knit close with quadrat stones
Free, all incised and shorne;
Of these the pend with arches sevine
Supported is and borne.
Scharp poynted buttresses
Be both that breaks and byds
The power of the winter speats
And strength of summer tyds." [1]

Thus, having set up his shrine of learning in the far north, he made the path towards it smooth and safe.

Of the precise course of study which Wilson pursued at Aberdeen it is, of course, impossible to speak; but we know that there were men there qualified to teach not only Theology, but Canon and Civil Law, Medicine, and Arts. We have his own authority for saying that, for some years, he studied philosophy in his own

1 A. Garden, 1619, trans. of Boyce, Spalding Club.

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country; and, if the course of study was in his case what it appears to have been by the old records of the University, there can be no doubt of its thoroughness. The young college was, as might be expected, monastic in its constitution. Some of the students, however, appear to have lived outside its walls, only paying rent when they occupied its rooms. Five o'clock in the morning was the hour for rising, and at nine in the evening the relentless hebdomodar made his final round. At meal time, the bursars—wearing white leathern belts "in proof of obedience"—gave thanks and read a chapter of the Bible prescribed by the principal. No arms were allowed to be worn, no visits to the town permitted without leave, and (what seems more terrible than all, in these degenerate days) "all conversation was to be in Latin, Hebrew, or Greek."

It is probable that after passing through his four years' course, Florence Wilson paid a visit to his Morayshire home, and spent much of his time, as we have seen, with young Ogilvie. This part of his life, however, is the most obscure of the whole; and this fact is much to be regretted, since the next position in which we find him is the important one of tutor to the nephew of Cardinal Wolsey at the University of Paris. How the Morayshire youth, with all his Aberdeen learning, could have worked his way into such a promising situation in such a far off quarter is only one of the many similar questions which arise, all over the world, where there are high places to be won. The inevitable Scotsman is found at the top, without deigning to explain how he got there.

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It seems to be doubtful whether Wilson had gone to study at Paris before gaining this appointment, or had been selected by Wolsey to accompany his nephew to France. Elphinstone himself, his Principal, and his most eminent professors, all hailed from the College of Montaigu in Paris, and there is every likelihood that it was by their advice, and possibly with their assistance, that Wilson went abroad. We know that there were bursaries for students coming from Morayshire "in ecclesia collegiata de Crychtoun Scoto Parisiis," but the great probability is that he went direct to the old school of his masters in the University. The date of his going is unknown, as are almost all the facts as to his position or career in the French capital.

To any one engaged or interested in literature, even apart from politics or religion, it was a time of change and excitement. The great wave of the new learning, with all its undercurrents and side-swirls, was setting strongly and swiftly westward. The age of "retoriqueurs" was nearly over, and the "Pleiade" had not yet been formed. In the dearth of personal facts as to Wilson's stay in Paris (which lasted till about 1532) it may be permitted us to fill up the blank with a few notes on the life then led under the shadow of Notre Dame.

The Scots College at Paris was founded in 1326 by the Bishop of Moray. Upon the close relations which long subsisted between France and Scotland we need not dwell. Nor need we recall the names of famous Scotsmen who there received that polish which was perhaps not altogether unnecessary in the case of the

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big-boned but hard-headed lads who, with the sound of the Dee and the Spey in their ears, found themselves in the midst of the glittering tumult that filled the streets of Paris with colour and movement, with alternate bloodshed and song.

The College of Montaigu, to which it is probable that Wilson attached himself, had fallen, some forty years before, into something like ruin. Crevier[1] tells us that in 1483 "tous les titres de cette maison étoient perdus: il lui restoit à peine onze sols de rente: les bâtimens tomboient en ruines: on n'y voyait plus d'etudians." But a restorer was at hand in the person of Jean Standonc, a man of singular force of character. We are told that owing to extreme poverty in his youth he was compelled to fill the humblest offices in the house of St. Genevieve, and yet educated himself by stealing up, after a laborious day, to the bell tower above; and there reading all night by the light of the moon. When at length he rose to be Principal of the College of Montaigu, he resolved on setting it in order. By his own energy, and the liberality of some eminent friends, he rebuilt and finished the college and gathered in it no less than 84 bursars. The one great object which he set before him was the preservation of the benefits of the foundation to its original objects, namely, the poor. To effect this he took the plan of rendering the life of his scholars as hard and humiliating as possible. A terrible picture and yet a noble one is given of the domestic eeonomy within the restored building. "On the commencement of his rule the scholars whom he

1 "Histoire de l'Université de Paris."

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instructed used to go to Chartreux to receive along with paupers the bread which the clergy distributed at the door of the convent. Everyone knows how frugal the nourishment of these youths was: bread, vegetables, eggs, herring, all in small quantity, and never any meat. In this austere life the scholars were compelled to practise all the fasts of the church, to follow the quadragesimal observance during Advent, to fast every Wednesday, and often on other particular occasions. Nothing could be poorer than their dress and bedding. They rose very early and chaunted many offices. Moreover they laboured at cooking, served the refectory, and swept out the halls, the chapel, the dormitory, and the stairs." This cruel and sordid regime provoked a remonstrance from one of the most distinguished of all those who had to undergo it. Erasmus, in one of his "Colloquies," complains bitterly of his miserable boyhood, and tells us that in many cases this treatment resulted in blindness, madness, disease, and even death. As might have been expected, however, this strict rule did not continue long in its original form. By the time Wilson reached Paris, it had been considerably altered. Francis I. was King, and that wonderful age of new ideas and ancient splendours, of mingling sunset and sunrise which we call the rennaissance, was reaching its highest point. In looking over the chronicles of the University of Paris at this time, we find no events of supreme importance, but many disturbances, and a sort of growing uneasiness. There is the "affaire du Concordat," the "affaire de Reuchlin," and in 1520, the censure of Luther, whose doctrines began to insinuate

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themselves, greatly to the indignation and alarm of the older authorities. One of these, in whose person or character one cannot help thinking there must have been something of the ludicrous, was Noel Beda, Principal of the College of Montaigu. This reverend personage appears to have formed a butt for much juvenile wit on the part of the students. It was their custom on the "fête des Rois" to produce plays and comedies, "où souvent les traits mordans et satyriques n'étoient pas épargnés." On the 5th of December, 1521, Beda complained to the heads of the University that he had been held up to ridicule. The result was that measures were taken for the suppression of these exhibitions, although these do not appear to have been very efficient, for in 1531 we find him again made fun of in a college play. A greater fame, however, was in store for him, for he had the distinction of evoking the gigantic laughter of Rabelais himself. One of the treatises found by Pantagruel in the library of St. Victor was "Beda—de Optimate Triparum."

The election of rectors in the University appears to have been attended with some of the phenomena which we witness in Scotland to-day, along with other characteristics which are now happily absent. One of these elections, which took place in 1524, was the occasion of more than usual violence. Owing to signs of disturbance which early manifested themselves, the University presented a petition to Parliament that precautionary measures should be taken. "Le Parlement chargea le prevôt de Paris ou son lieutenant criminel d'y tenir le main. Celui-ci se transporta donc

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le seize au matin avec des sergens armés a l'Eglise de St. Julien de Pauvre où devoit se faire l'election, d'abord des Intrans, puis du Recteur. Fabri (a candidate) avoit aussi avoc lui des gens en armes, dont plusieurs n'étoient pas même du corps de l'Université mais artisans, méchaniques, et vile populace. Le tumulte fut tel qu'on pouvoit l'attendre de sembables preparatifs, les portes et fenêtres de l'Eglise furent brisées, le magistrat ne put se rendre le maître, et le Recteur qui étoit gagné, manoeuvra si bien qu'il y eut une apparence d'election moyennant laquelle, il installa Fabri. Il est dit dans le procès que l'indigne Recteur recut la promesse de vingt cinque écus qui lui fut faite et garantée sur l'autel de St. Julien. Un grande partie de la Faculté des Arts s'étoit retirée dans la Chapelle de S. Blaise qui étoit voisine: et là, il se fit une autre election qui tomba sur Jean Faverel." The ultimate result does not concern us, but the evidence that we have here of violence and bribery is interesting in its place.

In the year 1529, George Buchanan, then only 23 years of age, was elected procurator of the German nation, that is, the nation which included students of British nationality. He was regent in the College of St. Barbe, and it was probably during this period that the friendship between him and Wilson was formed.

An event of great importance in the following year was the institution of Royal professors, that is, the foundation of the "College Royal" in Paris. This movement took its rise from the passionate love of the king for the ancient languages and his zeal for their cultivation. Some difficulties were interposed, but

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ultimately, a professorship of Greek and one of Hebrew were created. We have the authority of Mackenzie, in his "Lives of Scottish Writers," for the fact that Bishop Du Bellay nominated Wilson for the Greek chair, but, owing to his having fallen into disfavour at Court, was unable to bring his nomination to a successful issue.

During the whole, or the greater part of his stay in Paris, Wilson was under the protection and supported by the bounty of John, Cardinal de Lorraine. Indeed, his whole manhood appears to have been passed in close relationship with the Princes of the church. No sooner does one disappear from his history than another takes his place. We have seen that Wolsey was the first to befriend him; and whether the liberality of Lorraine was concurrent or no we cannot say, as all the facts of our hero's life have to be gathered from the most scattered and precarious sources. There does, however, exist direct testimony from his last patron—Cardinal Sadoleto—that during his course of study in Paris Wilson received an annual allowance from the Cardinal of Lorraine. We have also trustworthy evidence that Wolsey's death in 1530 severed the Scottish tutor's connection with the young man whose education had been committed to his charge. It does not appear, however, that Wilson ever broke off connection with eminent men in England, for a letter exists, written about this time, which is one of the most interesting of our author's remains. There are only three of Wilson's letters in existence—one written at this time in English, and two others at a later date in Latin. It is explained

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by the learned editor, to whom we owe the reproduction of two of them in one of the collections of the Bannatyne Club, that this first letter was addressed to Thomas Cromwell, who was employed by Henry VII. after Wolsey's fall in obtaining private information from the Continent. The address, and part of the letter, have been unfortunately destroyed by fire. For many reasons the letter is an interesting one. It affords, at first hand, a picturesque glimpse of the critical state of religious parties in Paris. It is also of interest biographically, as showing the high trust placed in Wilson, who was still a young man, and who had apparently only his own abilities to thank for winning the position in which he found himself. We shall quote the latter part of this letter without modifying the quaintness of the spelling:

"Other matters I dif(fer to my cuming, wiche, be the grace of Gode, shall be (in xv.) or xvi. days. In the meane tyme I commend h(umblie) Nicolas Fedderstone my procture of Spelhur....., besiching you to help and succurs him in hi(s neid) George Hamptones servand wiche arrived (in this toun) yiester-evin, hoc est xiiij die Aprilis, spakke (to me of) bookis to your masterschip, and being will(ing to buy) the same and not having great plenty as (I was wont) of money, I went to Maister Hamptone (who spakke) to me, and said vith a mervelus liberall (air I suld) not laike no money for ony thing thing that concer(neth your) Maisterschip declairing your great humanite (which was) daylie schaw to him; and so suche new th(ings as are) heir I shall bring vith me in all haist. (I pray) God have your Maisterschip in his keeping.

"At (Paris) the xxv. of Aprile be

"Yor awn Servand,

"FLORENCE VOLUZENE."[1]

[1] Bannatyne Misc. I., 325.

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We should like to have had a peep into the wallet of books which Wilson brought over to his Maisterschip. And we can well imagine the humane delight with which he made that small collection—a hoard of treasures which had hitherto been inaccessible to his own poor purse.

There is little doubt that Wilson went to London, as he proposes in this letter. While there, he appears to have made or renewed acquaintance with a remarkable number of prominent men—Dr. Starkey, Fox, Bishop of Hereford, Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, Fisher the unfortunate Bishop of Rochester, besides his friend Cromwell, at that moment perhaps the most notable man in the whole kingdom. It was while here probably that he arranged with Bellay, the Bishop of Paris, then in London, to accompany him to Rome, a journey which proved a momentous one for his personal fortunes. In the whole career of Wilson we have the proverbial pride and poverty of a Scotsman shown in a series of startling contrasts. The poor Morayshire boy becomes tutor to the nephew of the greatest public man of the age. Immediately after, we find him "not having great plenty, as I was wont of money," and receiving a precarious pension to enable him to carry on his studies. Here we have him once more among bishops and ambassadors, in the centre of things, so to speak, and about to have fulfilled, as he hoped, one of the dearest dreams of his life, that of seeing Rome in the train of an illustrious embassy. Yet, in a few months, we shall find him in sickness and poverty, only saved from beggary by his native genius and the spell which his intellectual

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qualities, in one short interview, threw around one of the greatest scholars in Europe. He had not the sword of Dugald Dalgetty or of Marshal Keith, but the weapons he possessed were no less keen or less ready to hand when his fortunes fell.

Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, and afterwards Cardinal, was the most prominent member of a famous family. His elder brother Guillaume was a soldier and diplomatist whose "Memoires," along with those of a younger brother, form an important link in that wonderful chain of personal reminiscences which accompanies the whole course of French history. A third brother, Bishop of Le Mans, turned the family talent in the direction of floriculture. A cousin of these men, or, as some say, a nephew of the Cardinal's, became more illustrious than any of the older generation, for Joachim du Bellay has been called the Ovid of France. It was he who originated the "Pleiade," and helped to infuse the whole course of French literature with strength, and volume, and splendour, drawn from the forgotten sources of ancient art. The Cardinal himself was a man of varied culture, an astute diplomatist, an able administrator, and no mean poet. These were the days of neo-Latin verse, and, if we can pierce behind the the mass of mythological ornament with which his admirers, such as Macrinus and Masurius loaded their verses, we find him to have been regarded as an amiable and appreciative patron, which all the facts of his life go to prove. When Henry of England had reached the crisis of his quarrel with Rome it fell to Bellay to undertake the delicate task of asking delay for his

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defence from Clement VII., and for this purpose he left London, carrying with him in his train Florence Wilson.

Of Wilson's intentions in undertaking this journey we are not left in doubt. He wished to see Rome; and this was not only an immediate, but a flattering opportunity. There is evidence, too, that Cardinal de Lorraine had advised him to this step, and we cannot wonder that his wish to set his foot in the Eternal City is described as a "burning desire." We have an interesting glimpse of Wilson during his visit to London, walking with Dr. Starkey in the garden of Antonius Bonvisius, a man who appears to have taken a fancy to the learned Scotsman, and who is introduced to us both at Lyons and London. The course of conversation turned, as was natural, on Wilson's future, and he expressed his anxiety to find some place where he could find peace and leisure to pursue his studies in philosophy—"procul a turba philosophari." Starkey suggested the little town of Carpentras, in the south of France, whose bishop, at that time, was the learned Sadoleto. This suggestion was not forgotten by Wilson, and, although, in the meantime, there occurred the chance of the journey to Italy, we shall see how opportunely it recurred to his mind.

While in London, and probably under the roof of Bonvisius, Wilson composed a set of verses which he introduced afterwards into his principal work.

Nothing that we know of occurred worthy of mention till the Embassy reached Lyons. But here arose a crisis in our hero's fate. He tells us that he now again met with his friend Bonvisius, and that his intentions

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had begun to waver as to whether it were better for him to proceed to Italy, or to go only so far as Carpentras. The cause of this doubt was probably his own failing health, for we know that he was ill when he arrived at Avignon. Whether any coolness had arisen between him and the bishop it is hard to say. In his own letter to Dr. Starkey he says nothing about either illness or quarrel, but in the version of his story which Sadoleto reports in a letter to Cardinal de Lorraine, the reason for the separation from the expedition is given as "adversa valetudo et inopia rerum necessarium." The latter is not easily explained if he still retained the favour of the great man who was forced to leave him behind on account of innocent misfortune.

However this may be, we would fain have it, and there appears nothing to the contrary, that the disjunction did not occur till the embassy had reached Avignon. For between these two places Wilson would have been thrown into the society of a man whom he would not easily forget, although he might not then have fully appreciated the privilege. At Lyons, the Bishop du Bellay took into his service as physician no less a man than Francois Rabelais.

We are singularly fortunate in having preserved to us, in freshness and detail, an account of the interview between Sadoleto and Wilson at their first meeting. The unhappy scholar who had been stranded, as it were, in the wake of the great embassy, in poverty and sickness, at Avignon, made his way, after a time, and with what hopes and misgivings we can only imagine,

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to make trial of the only chance that seemed to remain to him. It was late at night before he reached the Bishop's door. But we shall give the rest in Sadoleto's own words.[1]

"Four days ago," he says, in a letter to his nephew Paul, "I had retired to my library as night approached and there sat turning over the leaves of some books when my steward came in and said that some one wanted to see me. I asked him who it was." "A man wearing a gown," he replied. I ordered him to be shown in: and he entered. I then asked him what he wanted in coming to me at such an hour (for I wished to get rid of the man quickly, and resume my reading). My visitor then began from the beginning; and he spoke so aptly, accurately, and modestly, that I felt inclined to question him further and to find out more about him. So I shut my book, turned towards him, and began asking him where he came from, what his profession was, and why he had come hither.

'I am a Scotsman,' he said.

'Do you mean to say that you come from that remotest corner of the earth?'

'I do.'

'Then where did you study the liberal arts?'

"I could not help asking this, as his speech was full of Latinity and genius.

'First in my native country, I gave several years to the study of philosophy, then I continued my education at Paris, where I was tutor to the nephew of the Cardinal of York. Afterwards, when the death of his

[1] Sadolet. Epist., 657.

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uncle had separated the boy from me, I betook myself to Bellay, the Bishop of Paris, with whom I was on my way to Rome, when my severe illness separated us on the way.'

'What do you expect here, then?'

'It was my long cherished desire of seeing you,' he replied, 'that brought me here. And when it was told me at Avignon that you were looking out for some one who should act as teacher in this town, I resolved to offer myself, if I should be found worthy of the post—not so much out of eagerness for the situation as from a wish to be agreeable to you, and knowing, at the same time, that any post I may fill under you, or by your recommendation, will further my credit.'"

So the account breaks off. "Quid quaeris?" writes the Cardinal, and proceeds to tell of the next day's proceedings.

"I was so pleased with him," he continues, "that early next morning I sent for Glocerius the magistrate, and Helia. I spoke to them of my hopes of this stranger and how favourably his whole bearing had struck me. For, truly, one could scarcely have hoped, even in an Italian, for such modesty, prudence, and such a prepossessing countenance and manner as his. Not content with this, I asked my physician, of whom I have written you before, Helia, and the magistrates to dine with me, and meet this Florentius (for that is his name). After dinner, I got them on to a discussion, and some question in physics having turned up, the doctor launched forth with vehemence, twisting his face and puffing violently (certatum a medico nostro acriter,

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obtorto vultu, magnisque anhelitibus). The other, modest, placid, said nothing that was not to the point, nothing but what was quietly accurate, and at the same time profound and intelligent. When I had put a knotty point against the doctor, which he had infinite labour to get out of, Florentius, begging pardon, proceeded to solve the question as learnedly and skillfully as it could possibly have been done. What more? All present were seized with a desire to retain him among us. The magistrates called him aside, and the matter was arranged at a salary of 100 gold pieces. This has pleased the citizens so much, I hear, that they are all of opinion that a fresh piece of good fortune has fallen on the town. They also speak of the way in which he has spoken to the magistrates, than which nothing could be more liberal or ingenuous. From all this, I hope the office has been provided for in the best possible manner. And a further gratification to me is that he has a knowledge of Greek which he can impart to his pupils."

Such a brilliant assault on a difficult position well deserved to be recorded, and there is a peculiar grace in the kindly and spirited narrative of the learned Bishop. Here, then, the wandering scholar had again found rest for the sole of his weary foot; not, be it remembered, in a mere chance situation, accepted to ward off starvation, but in the very place which he had cast his eyes on some time before, and under the man whose society he most highly prized.

Wilson made conscientious efforts to prove worthy of the trust that had been so promptly reposed in him,

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and we find him, not long after his appointment, making a journey to Lyons to procure the necessary books. There, it was natural that he should take up his quarters with his friend Bonvisius, from whose house he wrote the letter that we have noticed to Dr. Starkey in London. It is a graceful and interesting letter, which want of space prevents us from quoting at length. One sentence we cannot omit.

"Itaque, mi Starchee, constitui hic annos aliquot procul turbis, procul ambitu, procul denique curis omnibus, nisi fortunæ me violentia huic abripiat, philosophari."

He commends himself to all his distinguished friends in London, and from certain items of contemporary news, we are able to say, although the letter is undated, that it was written in 1535.

In the following year, we find a letter from Sadoleto to the Cardinal de Lorraine in which Wilson is spoken of in the highest terms. "Florence is now with me at Carpentras," he writes, "giving his mind with the greatest eagerness and industry to study, more especially to philosophy, and our daily conversations are, to me, most pleasing and grateful." A hint is also given to his old patron that a continuance of the pension formerly received would be of the utmost use, and well deserved.

It was in this position of studious quiet and comparative ease—"procul turba," at last—that Wilson set himself to the composition of the work that has preserved his name. It was preceded by a theological disquisition which has, somehow, perished, and which, from its title, we perhaps may venture to think was not

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so eminently worthy of preservation. It was called "Commentatio quædam Theologica quæ eadem precatio est in Aphorismos dissecta," and was printed by Gryphius at Lyons in 1539. We learn from Gesner that Wilson was about this time still in the prime of his manhood—"juvenili adhuc ætate" is the expression—a melancholy testimony, when we reflect that, in six years, George Buchanan would be writing that plaintive quatrain of his on the lonely grave of his friend, "quam procul a patria."

It is far from our intention to give any detailed analysis of the "De Tranquillitate." Such labour would be lost on those who can enjoy it for themselves; to all others we may seem to have said too much already. But we cannot conclude without giving a slight sketch of the book and noticing one or two points in it.

It was published at Lyons by Sebastian Gryphius in 1543. The copy of this edition which we have seen and handled is an interesting one bearing the book-plate of Ruddiman. It is a moderately thick quarto bound in brown leather with prominent ribs on the back, and the edges covered with old gilding that has not lost its lustre. The famous griffin of the great printer is on the title page, surrounded by clear and beautiful renaissance ornament. The preface, which ends, as usual, in the shape of an inverted pyramid, is in italic letters, the body of the work in strong Roman type. There are two initial letters of exquisite execution and design. Around each page is a line, not printed, but drawn in red ink.

The book is written in the form of a dialogue. On

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the pleasant slopes of a garden near Lyons, from whence, between the trees, could be seen the shimmering reaches of the Rhone, three friends, Wilson, Franciscus Michælis of Lucca, and Demetrius Caravalla, sauntered one sunny morning, drinking in the pure air which tasted sweet after their close reading, looking with delight on the wide and fair landscape that lay beneath them, and talking of many things. Wilson was somewhat troubled, for he had heard of war and disturbance in Britain, and, like a true Scot, his most sensitive side was always turned towards home. After an eloquent prediction on his part of the future union of the two nations, the talk turns to less material things and gradually settles into a discussion of the best means by which a man may obtain tranquillity of soul.

After about a third of the book has been occupied by a deep and widely learned disputation on this subject, we come to something which has a more concrete interest. This is the "somnium singulare" which Wilson relates as a memory of his youth in Morayshire. It is at this point that he introduces his friend John Ogilvie, and the walks and talks which they used to have on the banks of the Lossie. We have already referred to this incident. We have seen that Ogilvie had appealed to Wilson for philosophical comfort, and that he had promised, on the morrow, to bestow it to the best of his ability. While asleep, that night, he dreamt a dream.

He seemed to be walking in a region of exquisite beauty, which was no other than that of his birth. Around him were wooded slopes and, sleeping among

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them, a wide lake, haunted by wild swans; while, not far off, stood the good town of Elgin, crowned with its Cathedral towers. Near him was a hill, around whose base wandered a clear and shallow river full of darting fish. On the summit of the hill, stood a temple of Parian stone, and round it was a grove of trees among which there grew the myrtle, the laurel, the cypress, and the terebinth. Apple trees, and nut trees, too, there were, and among them the singing of birds. Down the hill sides ran trickling streams, while through the trees passed the light whisper of the wind—no poisonous or hurtful creature vexed the place.

The Temple itself, that seemed of Parian stone, was of exquisite architecture; and all around it, was a wide and spacious wall. At the gate an old man sat—a very Democritus in mien and habit. As Florence came nearer, he spoke to the old man but received only a bow. Again he addressed him and was answered in Latin but with a Greek accent. The answer was but a request to look above, and there, over the gateway, Florence read

Ο ΤΗΣ ΕΥΘΥΜΙΑΣ ΟΙΚΟΣ

"The House of Tranquillity." On being bidden to enter, Florence then came upon eight pillars, each of which bore an inscription. These inscriptions were in the form of moral precepts; and they lead the author into as many separate discussions, in which a vast mass of classical and patristic philosophy is employed, with Ciceronian grace, to shed light upon the theme. This forms the main bulk of the whole work, and the final

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allegory is concerned with even higher things. For when his guide had disappeared he lifted his eyes to heaven, as though still unsatisfied in his quest, and there, on a sublime height, he saw a grander temple. Words fail him to describe it. On the narrow path that led to its gates, the dreamer met St. Paul, who pointed, as the old philosopher had done, to the words above the door. They were—"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house," and on the pillars on either hand was written, "Know thyself" and "Know thy God." Above the arch that these supported, was carven the wounded, thorn-crowned Christ—and Florence woke in an ecstasy of thanks and praise for the celestial guidance of his dream.

The allegory is an obvious one, but it is drawn with as fine and pure hand, and may rank with the "Palace of Art" in width of conception, and rightness of intention. As we have confined ourselves to a strictly biographical task, however, we shall leave to others all minuter criticism.

There is one point of antiquarian interest which we can scarcely pass over. Some writers have imagined that, in his Temple of Tranquillity, Wilson meant to describe Elgin Cathedral as it existed in his day. This can scarcely be, as his Temple is placed near Elgin, where there is a magnificent edifice—namely the Cathedral. If he meant to describe it at all, he probably would have given it the higher place, that of the Christian fane, which rose over the pagan temple. One of his biographers has suggested the eminence of Lady Hill with its castle and chapel as the place in

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Wilson's mind. It seems to us that a readier explanation would be to suppose that the Palace of Spynie, which he must have remembered at its best, with David's Tower newly built and rivalling in its creamy sandstone and crisp chiselling the lustre of Parian marble, must have at least suggested a description which is no doubt almost entirely imaginative. It, too, stood on a gentle rising ground, and the swan-haunted lake washed its outworks. But this is a matter in which we cannot expect our readers to be seriously interested.

The biography of Wilson's book is a short story. The first edition by Gryphius, as we have seen, was in 1543. A second, edited by David Echlin, physician to Queen Henrietta Maria, appeared at Lyons and the Hague in 1637-42. Ruddiman next took the work in hand, adding many biographical scraps and a preface in 1707. Finally, in 1758, George Wishart, Principal of Edinburgh University, brought out an edition containing an analysis of the whole treatise and an introduction by Dr. Ward of Gresham College. Some other works have been attributed to Wilson, but, with the exception of some verses, the "De Tranquillitate" must be taken as all that he has left us. It was occasionally referred to in the last century. In Smollet's "Reprisal," a Scotch Ensign, addressing an Irish Lieutenant, cries, "Hoot fie, Captain Oclabber, whare's a' your philosophy? Did ye never read Seneca 'De Consolatione,' or Volusenus, my countryman 'De Tranquillitate Animi?'" In a letter to Johnson, from Edinburgh, on January 8th, 1778, Boswell writes, "Did you ever look at a book

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written by Wilson, a Scotchman, under the Latin name of Volusenus according to the custom of literary men at a certain period? It is entitled, 'De Animi Tranquillitate.'" [1]

But with all the longed for rest and quiet of his school at Carpentras, the spirit of Florence Wilson was not satisfied. With all his intellectual and moral tranquillity, there was rising in his breast a desire which no man, and least of all a Scotsman, can well control. He longed for home. Through all the 'De Tranquillitate' there breaths this plaintive longing—and a sort of half-expressed suggestion that the satisfaction of this, too, is necessary to the happy life.

It was not a cheerful prospect, for Scotland, at the time, had entered on the wildest day in all the long storm of her history. Still, he had resolved to return, with what definite or material objects we scarcely know, but we may well believe with high hopes and glad anticipations. One cause at least for his leaving Carpentras is pretty obvious. The good old Sadoleto—a Cardinal since 1536—worn with the cares of its high office, retired in 1544 to Rome.

Two years after this, we find Wilson preparing for his journey. And to whom should he turn in such a moment of doubt but to his old master? He wrote to the Cardinal, at Rome, laying before him the difficulties which had occurred to him as to his future conduct in Scotland. How should he act between Catholic and Reformer? Sadoleto, be it said, had never been a bigot. · His leanings towards friendliness, at least with

1 Notes and Queries, III. 29.

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the new religion, were well known, and it is not surprising that Wilson should be in doubt on such a point. Sadoleto's letter, which is preserved, is a beautiful one—kindly and encouraging, it need hardly be said—and urges him to keep fast the ancient faith, and to consecrate to it all his learning and genius.

Alas for such anticipations! Florence had only reached the ancient town of Viennes, in Dauphiny, when he was seized with sickness and died. The beautiful epitaph of George Buchanan has already been referred to—

> "Hic Musis, Volusene, jacis carrissime, ripam
> Ad Rhodani, terra quam procul a patria.
> Hoc meruit virtus tua, tellus quae foret altrix
> Virtutum, ut cineres conderet illa tuos."

It is idle now to dream of the work which a man like this might have done had he lived. It is idle to regret so fine and true a spirit as his taken early from a world that stood, just then, so much in need of the quiet thought and quiet courage with which he was so greatly gifted. But surely it is not an idle task to piece together the short and sad story of one who should not be forgotten, of one who, "fortunae adversae et novercantis injuria exercitatissimus," has yet left within us a feeling of pride that he was our countryman.

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BOOKS AND BOOK-HUNTING

So many wise and witty things have been said about books, that it would be a hopeless task to endeavour to find a new phrase expressive of the extraordinary value and intellectual preciousness of written and printed literature. The invention of writing was one of primæval man's peculiarly happy thoughts, and the enormous mechanical advance which printing introduced has changed the whole aspect of human life more than any other discovery since history began. Like all great discoveries, this last looks so simple and obvious a thing that we marvel less at the genius that hit upon it, than at the unaccountable obtuseness of the generations to whose minds it never occurred before.

I am not going to re-tell the often told story, or to discuss the probabilities of Coster or Gutenberg having been the really first inventor. I intend to speak mainly of Books—books as we know them—not of hieroglyphics or papyrus leaves, Assyrian blocks, or even of monkish manuscripts.

A very few words, however, are perhaps necessary as to ancient books; for whatever their form may have

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been, we must needs remember that the love of them was as pronounced in olden times as in our own, that the veneration for, and care of them (perhaps from their greater individual value) was infinitely greater.

In Greece the boys at school were taught to write on waxen tablets; and the Greek book, written on parchment, was in the form of a roll, with a little label called the *sillubos* at the end. A learned man's study in Greece must have somewhat resembled a paper-hanger's shop of our own day,—shelves or cases filled with these tightly rolled and ticketed manuscripts. The Roman book was something of the same kind. In the days of the early Empire, the book trade is said to have been enormous,—scarcely inferior to what it is in our own day,—the place of the printing press being taken by large companies of slaves, who were solely employed in the copying of manuscripts. There were book-shops, too, in large numbers in ancient Rome; and besides these, there was a system of public recitation by which authors unburdened themselves of unpublished works to a more or less appreciative audience. However much we may deplore the excessive production of books in our own day, we may, I think, congratulate ourselves on being spared *this* form of literary infliction.

Greece and Rome have passed away, and much of their interest (save to the classical scholar), has passed with them into historical oblivion.

"Now the Forum roars no longer,"

and the book-hunting of which I will speak applies more to the books of the revival of learning and modern

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times than to the pursuit of such higher game as original texts.

In these days of cheap editions it is indeed doubtful whether the rather old-fashioned form of madness, known as *Bibliomania*, will long survive. Books are daily becoming more accessible, more diffused, and less attractive to the mere collector. But it would be folly to complain of this. It is indeed in many ways a great blessing, as it brings within the reach of those who could not otherwise hope to possess them, the greatest results of literary genius.

But as it is not of ancient MSS. that I am going to speak, so, I may premise, it is not of purely modern books or reprints. I have introduced the word *book-hunting*, which is not, in its inner and deeper meaning, at all to be confounded with mere *book-buying*. Book-hunting is a sport—a taste—a vocation—a mania—a mission—or a hobby. It is not everybody who can, as it is not everybody who will, become a book-hunter. Book-hunters are born—not made—but, just as a "mute inglorious Milton" may continue digging the village potatoes until a flash of self-consciousness reveals his true destiny, so many of us may have lived hitherto without knowing the great possibilities of intellectual and æsthetic accomplishment of which we might be capable as book-hunters. In any event, whether you are inclined to join the hunt or not, you may not be uninterested to hear some of its charms, and especially of the noble game which forms its object.

Nor am I going to begin by quoting the Scriptural phrase about the making of many books, because I am

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bound to assume that you all know it; but I may, before beginning to deal with books, properly speaking, hazard the remark that more books have been lost than most of us have any idea of. We know that some animals have become extinct, and no one now goes out to fish for ichthyosauri or to shoot the wary dodo; but nothing is beyond the fine frenzy of the book-hunter's rolling eye,—and few but he knows how far beyond the limits of known and existing literature the boundaries of his happy hunting grounds extend.

Let us first then speak for a moment of Lost Books. Of the earlier lyric poets of Greece, we possess only fragments. Indeed, the whole literature of Greece known to us may be considered, in contrast with what it *might have been*, as only a magnificent "torso." Magnificent in conception, exquisite in execution, it is still only a fragment of the glorious inheritance which we *might* have found therein. Æschylus wrote 70 tragedies, and we possess only 7. Sophocles wrote 106 dramas, and we have only 7 of them. Euripides wrote over 100 plays, and only 18 remain. Aristophanes wrote 54 plays, and we have only a dozen left. Then in Latin literature, 107 books of Livy's history are lost, and 13 books of Tacitus, besides innumerable other works. It is curious to think of all this lost literature, buried thought, vanished art;—to think that somewhere, even still, there may be, lying concealed or neglected, some decaying tablet or soiled and tattered parchment that, if brought to light, would charm, enlighten, or instruct the entire civilized world. It is curious to speculate how much better, or wiser, or more cultivated the world of

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men would have been if the little accidents of time had not interrupted these streams at their source. In our day, when every line, almost every word, written by the authors of classic antiquity has formed the subject of a whole mass of critical exposition, it is almost overwhelming to calculate the sensation which would be produced by the finding of, say, 50 new dramas by Sophocles, or of 10 books of Tacitus.

Virgil's Æneid is a work which illuminated, almost *formed* the golden age of Augustus. It preserved its fame—though rather in the shape of a dark, or magic lantern—during the Dark Ages; and since then it has been the daily school-companion of our fathers and ourselves. Yet never was any work nearer extinction than the Æneid. When Virgil had written the 6th book, one of the finest in the whole poem, he came before Augustus to recite his verses. The Emperor's sister was present, that Octavia who had just lost her son, the young Marcellus, a youth on whom all the affection of the imperial house and the Roman nation seemed centered. As the poet came to the magnificent and touching passage in which he refers to this young man's death, Octavia swooned away with emotion. It was only a few years after that Virgil started to go on a tour through Greece and Asia for the purpose of revising his great work. On the way, however, he met Augustus, and, returning with him, caught an illness of which he died at Brundusium. The poet, on his death-bed, impatient no doubt at the thought of not having been able to complete the revision of his poem, desired that the MS. should be thrown into the fire.

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His friends would not obey him in this. He left instructions in his will that the poem should be destroyed. Augustus, however, was so filled with admiration for it and for him that he disregarded the dying wish of the poet, and preserved for us the immortal Æneid.

Another remarkable instance of almost accidental survival of a great book occurs in the history of the Roman or Civil Law. The Emperor Justinian, wishing to collect together—to codify, in short,—the whole jurisprudence of the empire, issued a commission to the great lawyer Tribonian and ten fellow-labourers to collect, in one digest or body, the whole of the writings of the ancient jurists, which would consolidate or expound the principles of the Roman law. In three years, this work was accomplished, 9000 extracts were made and arranged from 2000 different works, and the whole was embodied in what is now known as the Digest or Pandects of the Civil Law. This work, one of the most gigantic in the history of literature, and which has had the same influence on mediæval and modern law as the pole star had on primitive navigation, was lost. It was not till A.D. 1130, far on in the dark ages, when light was beginning to glimmer about the north of Italy, that a discovery was made at Amalfi, a sea-coast town, of a unique manuscript of Justinian's Digest, from which so much learning and jurisprudence has since flowed. It is only fair, however, to add that this story is not looked upon as entirely authentic. It shows, however, on what a fragile tenure the greatest literary achievements of antiquity have hung before that

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wonderful but obvious discovery of printing had put them, practically speaking, beyond reach of such accidents.

Passing now from the consideration of ancient manuscripts, we find ourselves in the fifteenth century, on the threshold of the modern library.

It is interesting, and may be startling to some, to reflect that books, as we know them, owed somewhat of their origin to such frivolities as playing-cards. Yet it is undoubted that there were printed packs of cards before there were printed books. The operation of taking printed impressions from wooden blocks was employed first on such diverse subjects as kings and queens of spades and hearts and the effigies of saints. Mr. Hallam[1] says, "The latter," *i.e.*, the saints, "were frequently accompanied by a few lines of letters cut in the block. Gradually entire pages were cut in this manner; and thus began what we called block books, printed in fixed characters, but never exceeding a very few leaves. Of these there exists nine or ten, often reprinted, as it is generally thought, between 1400 and 1440." Mr. Hallam does not enter into the controversy which has arisen over the next stage in the evolution of the invention. The idea of using moveable types, so that when once set up they might be taken down and re-arranged in different combinations, apparently occurred to two minds at one and the same time—to Laurence Coster of Haarlem and to Gutenberg of Strasbourg. I shall not pursue the controversy as to printing. It is sufficient to know that Gutenberg, having taken Fust as a partner, set up as a printer in

[1] Hallam, Introduction to the Literature of Europe, c. iii. 18.

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Mentz. If it be permissible to parody a parody, we might alter the words of Lord Neaves's song of the Leather Bottèl and say, "Who e'er he be, we wish him luck, who first found out the printed book."

The first book printed was, as was fitting and proper, an edition of the Scriptures. This was a Latin version, now well known as the Mazarin Bible, from the fact that the first copy of it was found in the library of Cardinal Mazarin about the middle of the last century. Mazarin, an Italian by birth, was, about the middle of the 17th century, Minister of State in France, and during the minority of Louis XIV. had acquired an immense fortune. He had also accumulated a magnificent library. Among his books this wonderful work was first identified, for, of course, it was not altogether a unique discovery. Some 18 or 20 copies are known to exist. I am proud to say that I am a part owner of one of these, for the Mazarin Bible lies in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh. It is a grand old folio; and, looking on its pages, faintly tinted, not stained, by time, and tracing its clear black type, one is filled with strange feelings on standing face to face with what is undoubtedly *the most interesting book in the world.* It is the offspring of one of the most momentous ideas which ever entered the brain of man. It is the father of modern culture, the seed of the flower that has brightened and enriched the centuries that have passed since its date. When we think of the dim old work-room at Mentz, and the proud and eager spirits that worked there in secret, yet in triumph, we wonder whether a vision ever swam before their eyes of

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generation after generation ever widening and glorifying their discovery; of a world transfigured from the dull mumblings of monkish scriptoriums,—spots of doubtful light in an atmosphere of thick darkness,—to the broad white light that is showered and scattered every day and every hour of the day among us from the Titan hands of steam and steel, bringing to us news of battle and of glory, news of the lone explorer, diaries of the life of nations, before the ink on them is dry, the richest stores of the philosopher's brain, the airiest fantasies of poet's dream, all spread out and offered to us for the smallest pittance, all so pressed upon us that no one but an invalid or a fool can be excused from their use and enjoyment. It is something that calls for the cry, "Glory and love to the men of old!"

Let us put ourselves in the place of these old printers in 1465, and, supposing that we are eager then to apply our great invention to the best purpose, the multiplication of the noblest literature, what material should we have found ready to our hands? Apart from the Holy Scriptures, what great books were there then ready to be put in type?

We must remember that the revival of learning took place first, not in Germany, but in Italy. Schools were being formed in Italy for the teaching of Greek. Scholars were coming from the East full of oriental learning. The forgotten literature of Greece was, as it were, turning in its sleep. All honour must be paid to the great names of Petrarch and Boccaccio, who, not content with, or absorbed in their own fame, devoted a great part of their lives to the finding and acquisition of

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ancient MSS., principally of Greek and Latin authors. It was Boccaccio who first brought over from Greece a MS. of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.

The first edition, or *editio princeps* of Homer, was published at Florence in 1488, only 33 years after the Mazarin Bible. In that 30 years the art of printing had already spread to all the great centres of Italian culture, to France, and to England. This first edition of Homer, which was in two volumes, folio, is also in the Advocates' Library. Up to this time only a few of the classics had been printed, and as regards Greek texts, the typefounders had not been able, except imperfectly, to produce the intricate but beautiful alphabet of the language. In the earlier works, where Greek words appeared, they were written with the pen. Nothing is perhaps more remarkable in literary history than the swift and enormous accumulation of classical editions, classical critics, and writings of every sort relating to the ancient authors, their lives, poetry, and philosophy that broke out all over Europe about this time. It had commenced before the era of printing, but that discovery gave an enormous impetus to the movement. The leading figures in this Renaissance, as it is generally called, were Lorenzo de Medici in Florence, several other enlightened princes and scholars, and, perhaps more than all, some of the great first printers. They were not merely mechanics, or even mere publishers. They were scholars and artists.

The first of these whom I shall mention, and who is well worthy of your study, was *Aldus Manutius*, or in Italian, *Aldo Manuzio*. This famous scholar and

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printer was born at Bassiano in 1449. He established a printing press in Venice in 1490, and from that time onwards he continued to produce editions of the classics and similar works, distinguished by their careful editing and beautiful typography. In this latter direction he was an inventor. Besides a number of different alphabets of the Greek character, he caused to be put in use the sloping or flowing form of type which we now know as *Italics*. When a word is meant to be very emphatic we generally underline it in MS. We know that if we give that MS. to a printer he will set up our observations in ordinary type, but when he comes to an *underlined* word, he will set *it* up in what we call *italics*. That word was taken from the use and invention of Aldus in Venice, who there first introduced this graceful and pleasing form of type. The fame of Aldus Manutius, however, goes much further than this. He was a scholar in advance of his time, and not only a printer, but the founder of a dynasty of printers. The Aldine editions became the most valuable of the age, and on the old man's death in 1515, the business was carried on by his father-in-law, his son, and his grandson. The mark of Aldus was an anchor entwined with a dolphin, and the motto "Sudavit et alsit." These words, "He bore heat and cold," are borrowed from the poem of Horace on the Art of Poetry, where he impresses his hearers with the vigorous training which is necessary for the attainment of intellectual success.

The next great printer to whom I will direct your attention is *Sebastian Gryphius*. He was born in

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Germany in 1493, and his fame was acquired at Lyons, where he founded a famous printing house, and became one of the most distinguished publishers of the sixteenth century. His greatest work was a Bible in folio, published in 1550, in which he used the largest type that had hitherto appeared. In his preface he says the volumes are printed "*majoribus et augustioribus typis*"—with the largest and most august or distinguished type.[1] He published a great many of the classics, and was exceedingly careful in his revision of the proofs. Of his Bible, Chevillier (quoted by Bayle) says, "One generally places the *Errata* in the most obscure part of the work; Gryphius gave it the most conspicuous place, where one could not fail to see it. The first page was the title, the mark of the printer, and the year of impression; the second was the Errata, and the third the dedicatory espistle." So great was the fame of Gryphius that many of the most distinguished scholars publicly complimented him on his scholarship and fidelity. Gesner, Scaliger, Sadoleto all have paid him tribute. The latter, Cardinal Sadoleto, one of the most enlightened ecclesiastics of the sixteenth century, published through Gryphius a volume of very interesting letters, and one of these was addressed by the Cardinal to Gryphius himself. It is dated 1554—two years before the great printer's death. At page 184 we find the letter I have mentioned. The Cardinal says, "Whatever comes from your printing-house is held by all to be both correct and of approved goodness, if your name is inscribed in it. For your probity and

[1] Bayle's Dict. "Gryphius."

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diligence are known, as well as your erudition." You can see, in the title page, and at the end of this book, the "Griffin," which was the mark of Gryphius. Sebastian Gryphius was succeeded by his son *Antonius*, who carried on worthily the traditions of the house. There was a *John Gryphius*, a printer in Venice, about 1550, who does not seem to have been of the same family. I have an edition of Suetonius in Italian printed by him in 1554. These editions of Gryphius are sometimes to be met with in our old book shops; and to the book-hunter who, besides mere curiosity, has a pleasure in reading an old author from clear-cut type, and who enjoys, as only a book-lover can, the antique flavour, the old world atmosphere that such a book throws round itself like a halo, there are none more delightful than the careful pages of old *Sebastian Gryphius*.

Another great printer who was also a great scholar was the French *Henri Etienne*. He devoted himself mainly to Greek erudition, and commenced his great career by the publication at Paris, in 1554, of the *editio princeps* of Anacreon. Hallam[1] bestows high praise on him when he says—"The press of Stephens might be called the centre point of illumination for Europe." The distinguishing mark of Stephens was a tree with an old man standing by it, and the motto "*Noli altum sapere.*" A specimen of Stephen's typography which I possess is an edition of Diogenes Laertius, dated 1570, only thirty-seven years after the *editio princeps* of this author. Brunet says this edition is "thought well of and is

[1] Hist. of Lit., c.x., 13.

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uncommon." It at least shows how far the old printer had gone in the manufacture of Greek type, for the letters and contractions are singularly clear, as well as beautifully formed. The other work is on a smaller scale, and of this the great critic Chardon de la Rochette says that it is the most elegant edition of the somewhat peculiar work it contains. That is what were called *Homerici Centones*, i.e., a sort of parody of Homer, in which lines of the Iliad are so chosen and placed that they form a different narrative altogether. The same thing was done with Virgil, and this ridiculously wasted ingenuity was generally spent on constructing biblical and sacred narratives.

I do not intend to say much more about the older printers. I cannot, however, pass by the group of famous typographers whose head-quarters were in the Low Countries, such as *Plantin, Blaev, Hackius*, and the *Elzevirs*.

The most splendid of all these was Christopher Plantin, a Frenchman, who set up in Antwerp a printing house which soon became the wonder and admiration of the world. He seems to have had a genius for administration and the division of labour, for he had several presses going at the same time, and had brought into his service some of the finest scholars in Europe. A great polyglot Bible was his grandest achievement.

Of the other printers of the low countries I need only mention the *Elzevirs*. Louis Elzevir settled at Leyden in 1580. It was his descendants, however, who produced the series of works which are perhaps the most fascinating, as they are generally the first objects

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of the bookhunter's quest. The peculiarity of these Elzevir editions is their small size. Compared with the Plantin folio they look like very small game, but they are none the less interesting. Indeed, they are more so, for no books have been more imitated, and a great part of the interest in hunting them lies in the knowledge and skill necessary in distinguishing the true from the false. The mark of the Elzevirs was generally a *sphere*. But the matter is further complicated by the fact that the Elzevirs themselves did not always put their own names to the offspring of their presses. Sometimes they signed Schouter or Jean Sambix. In the Magazine of Art for 1894 there is a delightful article by Andrew Lang on the Elzevirs, to which I cannot do better than refer you for further information.

You will expect, however, that having said so much of German, Italian, French, and Flemish printers, I should not omit to notice those books which we may meet with in our wanderings which bear the name of British typographers. No account of the early book-trade would be complete which omitted the name of William Caxton. Caxton was born in 1422. After a somewhat adventurous youth, he returned to this country about 1476, and in that year established his printing press at Westminster. Before this, however, he had printed at Cologne a book entitled "A Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye." It was the first book printed in the English language. The first book printed *in England* was, probably, "The Dictes and Wise Sayings of the Philosophers." All Caxton's books are excessively rare. Some of them have very quaint titles. He seems

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to have been anxious to have his name appearing on his works, as it is sometimes repeated at the end. There is, for instance, "The lyf of Charles the great. Fynysshed in the reducyng of it into englyssche (by Will. Caxton). . . . The yere MCCCCLXXXV, and enprynted the fyrst day of decembre the same yere . . . explicit per William Caxton." Then again "Thymage or Myrrouer of the worde (translated out of french into english by me simple person Wyll. Caxton).—Finished the VIII. day of March: Caxton me fieri fecit." Caxton printed a great number of works, but as it is, I am afraid, extremely unlikely that any of us should become the possessor of a real Caxton we need not say more about him. Caxton's types were what is known as black-letter, but the Roman type was introduced by his assistant and successor Wynkyn de Worde.

Printing was introduced into Scotland by Chepman in the first years of the sixteenth century. It was not, however, until the eighteenth century that Scottish printing was distinguished by the famous names of Ruddiman in Edinburgh, and Foulis in Glasgow. Ruddiman was a native of the north country, and a student at Aberdeen. Going south, he filled the posts both of assistant Keeper, and Keeper of the Advocates' Library. After trying various pursuits, he became a great publisher, editor, and printer. A somewhat similar career was followed by the two brothers Robert and Andrew Foulis in Glasgow. Each of these publishers produced an "immaculate" edition—Ruddiman of

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Livy and Foulis of Horace. Their books are extremely correct and beautifully printed.

Some knowledge of the men and things I have been speaking of is necessary to give a real zest to the book-hunters' sport, but it is a sport which does not require much preliminary training. Like the appetite which comes in eating, the love of it grows upon the book-hunter until the question comes to be how it is to be restrained, rather than how it is to be fostered.

Like all wild sports, book-hunting depends to some extent on times and seasons. Sometimes the old book-stalls and the booksellers' catalogues will for a long time appear uninteresting and unprofitable. Nothing meets our eye that promises any interest. We may stand at a chilly street corner, turning over, with numbed fingers, endless rows of outworn divinity, cheap, second-hand classics, novels that have died in their very birth, poems that have brought their authors to destitution instead of into fame. We may turn wearily from a mass of literature in which poetry does not fly higher, or more cheerily, than into the heights—or depths—of Young's Night Thoughts; where science is represented by Treatises on Wire-fencing, with some pages wanting; and where the doors of romance are not opened wider for us than through the dingy covers of that excellent but exasperating work "The Adventures of Telemachus." I call this last work excellent, because I am told that it is so, and I call it exasperating because it is always there. There is no escaping it. Telemachus, Télemaque, Telemaco, in all shapes, sizes, and languages, and any number of volumes; it crowds the shelves of the

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bookstalls, shoulder to shoulder with odd volumes of Metastasio, or sandwiched between superannuated almanacs, and nothing is more depressing than an almanac which is superannuated and undestroyed.

But the golden rule of all good book-hunters is *patience* and *hope*. No book shop is too small, no book stall too mean for the explorer. No waste of old leather and vellum, be they as dark as the forests of Aruwimi, should daunt his patient toil, for if his stars are propitious, through the dust of his search there *will* come shafts of golden sunshine that will keep his heart warm for many days.

In this connection I may say, especially to young book-hunters that the old days of great bargains, financially speaking, are over. Every bookseller now-a-days knows far too much of his trade to part with any book below its selling value; but of course these values change, and more than that, the tastes and interests of men, and especially of collectors, are so various, that what may be a treasure to you is dross to others. It is this very element which removes book-hunting from all mercenary associations and places it within the fairy borders of romance.

And this element of romance has a strange effect upon those who are engaged either in the selling or buying of old books. The keeper of a dim, snug old bookstall in a side street is, generally speaking, as Shakespeare says, "subdued to what he works in, like the dyer's hand." Not that he is necessarily covered with dust or out at elbows like most of his wares, but he is generally a man of peculiar instincts and peculiar habits. His world is

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the world of the dead past, the voices he hears are silent to every one else, and even in that silence seem to him more musical and more commanding. Like some old apothecary, before chemistry had become an exact science, he sits among shelves filled with phials of strange potency, scarcely known even to himself. There are sweet and bitter essences, salves for heart and brain; rank herbs, it may be, here and there, or jars of honey from Hybla. He handles his treasures with loving care. He scans his customers with the eye of a man waking from sleep as he puts aside his spectacles and the little brown tome he has been pouring over. You will not, however, catch him asleep at a bargain, if for no other reason than that, however welcome the few shillings or even pence may be, he feels a wrench at his heart in parting with the meanest of his collection, and sometimes perhaps may put on an extra sixpence for no other reason than that.

I say nothing here, of course, of the great booksellers, of those famous collectors and dealers who deal in hundreds, sometimes in thousands, of pounds. These are the sublimer regions of the pursuit, they are the Himalayas of book-hunting. But almost in every town, now, of any size, there are old book shops, and even in out of the way places there are sales of books. Now and then in an old country house we come upon a really wonderful library, which, though we cannot acquire, we can at least admire.

Book-hunting takes precedence of other sports in nothing more than in this—its infinite *variety*. It can never be said that there is a sameness in books, or a

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monotony in book-hunting. For as various as are the tastes and interests of man, so various are the means of satisfying them by means of books. Suppose it is the history of some particular place, concerning which you wish to accumulate a library, you will find it to be marvellous how the list of your acquisitions will swell, in what unexpected places you will find stones for the building of your edifice, and, in one word, how much *more* there is in the world of even local books than you had any knowledge or anticipation of. This set purpose gives a direction, an object to your sport, and narrow though it may sometimes be, it will have the effect of focussing to one point the light that has hitherto been infinitely diffused, and you will find that your own satisfaction will be intensified by the reflection that in after years your toil will undoubtedly bear fruit and your labours will not have been in vain. Just as a deer-stalker despises the humble hare that leaps from his foot or even the whirring grouse that springs from the heather within easy shot, so the book-hunter who has got a hobby will look with contempt on the scraps and fragments that please his brethren. Some are all for tall copies, that is, uncut editions, books that have escaped the shears, more cruel than those of the Fates, by which the unfeeling binder has shorn the glorious old pages, making them in their wretched condition no more handsome than a fox without its tail—no more beautiful than a plucked peacock. Some are consumed with a passion for Elzevirs alone. Some will look at nothing but black-letter. Others again, and these are perhaps the finest sportsmen of all, direct their pursuit

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to some one particular age of literature or to some one group of authors. Even a single author will give work enough for a keen hunter for all the best of his hunting days, for it is wonderful how books accumulate and how the maker of one book is the cause of the making of many books in others. First we have the author himself—all his editions and all the variants and different *states* of his text—then we have translations into all the languages of Europe—then we have lives of the author—criticisms on the author—illustrations of the author—and we may go the length of portraits and autographs of the author—and even end by securing a lock of his hair. That, however, would lead us beyond even the broad boundaries of our sport. Let us, keeping strictly within these, and only as an example, take such a work as the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. We find the first and original edition is dated 1516, of quarto size, published at Ferrara—very rare—the next also at Ferrara in 1521. The learned Brunet, in his Manual, says, "A proof that this now so celebrated poem only obtained a moderate success is shown by the fact that five years elapsed before a second edition was published."[1] In 1524 other two editions appeared, one at Milan, the other at Venice. Another in 1528, corrected by the author himself. A copy of the edition of Ferrara of 1528 sold in London in 1813 for £63. Up to this time the *Orlando* had only contained 40 cantos. In the edition of 1532 at Ferrara, however, the poem extends to 46 cantos. One example of this is

[1] Brunet: Manuel du Libraire, "Ariosto."

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printed on vellum. At Turin in 1536 and Venice in 1542 Ariosto again appears. Ten separate editions come to light between 1542 and 1584. In that year a famous edition appears at Venice, in which there is some wonderful mystery about one of the plates. The illustrative engraving of the 34th canto is mostly wanting, and to fill its place the illustration to the 33rd canto is repeated. But in some rare copies—and these are just the sweet morsels that the book-hunter rolls under his tongue—the 34th plate is put on the top of the vain repetition of the 33rd; the 34th, so Brunet says, had not been ready at the same time as the others. In one copy at least this 34th plate has even been copied by the pen and put in its place. This plate is only a rather common-place picture of Astolfo coming from the harpies' cave on his flying horse, but for all that it is a mark of infinite value. Further, there was an English translation of Ariosto in which the original plates were copied, and in some instances the wonderful 34th plate has been taken from thence and put in its proper place. But that won't do, says M. Brunet. The difference can easily be told as, if this later imitation is imposed on the older copy you can easily perceive, probably by holding it up to the light, that the text on the back of the engraving *is in English*. It is perhaps not good for us to pursue such enquiries as this further, "for that way madness lies." Still editions of the Orlando pour from the presses of Europe, till we come on one hailing from Birmingham in 1773, the last point of English soil perhaps on which we might have expected the Paladin to rein up his steed. In Paris,

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London, Pisa, Milan, the publication of the great poem still goes on until we come to a French translation in 1741, when "Orlando Furioso" becomes "Roland Furieux." This was by no means the first translation, however, for as far back as 1550 we have Orlando Furioso "traduzido" into Spanish by Urrea and published at Leon. In 1756 at Arezzo appears a curious work—the Orlando translated into *Latin* verse by the Marchese Torquato Barbolani, a curious relapse, so to speak—probably only a metrical exercise or literary jeu d'esprit. Before the year 1607 we have the Orlando in English heroical verse, by Sir John Harrington of Bathe, Knight. In 1775 we have the same translated into English verse by Temple Henry Croker; in 1757 by William Huggins, in 1785 by John Hoole, and in 1823 by William Stewart Rose.

Such is a brief—but some may think not brief enough—glimpse of one of these avenues down which the delighted book-hunter may stray, seeing ever before him a further reach of sunshine or fretted shade, every now and then falling on by-ways and unnoticed nooks and grottos where the Muses and the Graces are hiding from his search.

But you may think that from anything that I have hitherto said, book-hunting is a species of mania which mistakes the mere externals for the root of the matter; that it is all a matter of printers' names, and the dates and marks of title-pages, and that the books themselves —the actual contents and purpose of them—have been laid aside. That, however, is not so. To my mind the tremulous and wavering margin between sane and insane

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book-hunting *lies just there.* Books are not mere objects. They have more inside them than blown bird's eggs, they are more informative than obliterated postage stamps, and it is just in that fact that lies the dignity of the pursuit, the loftiness of the art, the glory of the quest.

Granted that one has a good general knowledge of literature, we shall say of English literature to begin with, will there not be an interest in following our favourities in bodily form down through the past centuries back to the very cradle of their genius? Suppose we have read our Paradise Lost from the most sumptuous of modern copies, dressed in all the pageantry of morocco and of gold, illustrated by the finest triumphs of the engraver's knife or the etcher's needle, shall we be reproached if we hunt in some dark alley of the world of books for the quaint brown volume that first conveyed the organ voice of Milton to the world? Shall we, for all his latter grandeur, neglect him in his obscurity when he sold the greatest epic in the language for £5? Surely not. And, further, not one of our great poets or novelists but owes tribute, conscious or unconscious, to the past; and what pursuit can be imagined so likely to lead us into these trains of association, which connect the genius of the present with the achievement of the past, than the tracing from year to year, and century to century, the day, and hour, and place, and form in which the creative fancy first found voice? Suppose, again, that we are students of antiquity, that some of the great authors of the classic past has laid a charm upon our faculties, what more delightful than to

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follow his footsteps age by age, from frontier to frontier, from tongue to tongue; watching the loving care with which some of the great critic-nurses of literature, of whom I have spoken, have dressed him anew for the eyes of men, and how some enthusiast here and there has "greatly daring" turned his dead, but immortal speech into the throbbing accents of a living language? Every such effort, we cannot doubt, has resulted in an immense widening of his influence. It has acted as the bursting of a moss-grown embankment, the letting free of an imprisoned intellectual force, by which, so strange a thing is intellect, the original fountain-head is in no way weakened. This, which I may call the historical study of literature, is sometimes too little attended to; and yet it is a department of knowledge which is full of the richest instruction, and the most lasting interest. There is nothing more fascinating than to watch how literary forms and literary fashions pass from country to country, and from age to age. While one century is filled with the greatest efforts of poetic genius, when there is such a blaze of poetic talent as that which filled

"The spacious times of great Elizabeth,"

we find another hide-bound in the traditions of an outworn school of verbiage, or polishing its empty periods from elegance into inanity. At one age, everyone writes verse, at another, the poets seem fled for ever from the earth. At one time we are all for science, at another we are all for romance. Nothing tends to change the current of a nation's literary taste more than the translation into its language of some great work written

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under a different school and in a different tongue. Who can doubt the influence of the Italian novelists on Shakespeare? Who can fail to see that a particular form of romance—the picaresque school, as it is called—spread from one or two stories told by Spanish authors of the tricks and adventures of the rogues of their country? This, which I have mentioned last, may be taken as an instance of my meaning. From earliest times the subjects of romance had been the deeds of noble knights and fair ladies, of princes and princesses, dukes and enchantresses. But about the time when the world was convulsed with laughter by the broad fun of Rabelais and the ridiculous antics of Don Quixote, it occurred to certain Spanish writers to take for their models persons of the lowest class, travelling tramps, swindlers, and rogues, and by a relation of their adventures to cause a complete change of scene on the stage of European romance. Beginning with the Lazarillo de Tormes of Mendoza, and the Guzman de Alfarache of Aleman, this questionable taste spread rapidly. Lesage in France translated from this Spanish source, and there is no book, in part or in whole, which is oftener to be met with on the bookstall than that author's Gil Blas. The taste spread, and there is little doubt that our English writers of the type of Fielding have derived much inspiration from this source. One of these Spanish romances, *Guzman de Alfarache*, was published in Spain in 1599. The French translation by Lesage, which is the form in which the work is familiar, was not published for about 100 years after. So much has Lesage popularised these works, so to speak, that

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we generally look upon *him*, and read of *him*, as the founder or discoverer of this form of romance. I possess a volume which is typical of this particular source of interest in book-hunting. It is in Italian, and the title-page describes it as "*Vita del Picaro Gusmano d'Alfarace descritta da Matteo Alemanno di Siviglia, et tradotta dalla Lingua Spagnuola nell' Italiana da Barezzo Barezzi Cremonese.*" I have said the original Spanish was published in 1599. This book bears the date 1606—only seven years from its original appearance we have it turned into Italian. This lets us see how careful we should be in forming conjectures or propounding theories as to the spread of literary influences and tastes.

I think I have shown you that the true book-hunter must be a student of literature. As a mere collector he is no more to be esteemed than any other amiable trifler, but even in the matter of collecting there is sometimes a great interest. For instance, I have a copy of a certain Italian author which I had long looked upon as interesting, but not of any particular interest. It bore to be printed at Amsterdam in 1718. Reading one day in a treatise on old books, I discovered that there were two editions marked 1718. One the true edition, and the other a later reprint, much less esteemed. I further found that there were certain cunning tests by which the one might be distinguished from the other. I learned that if I looked at the 40th line of page 17 of the 1st volume I would find the word "ciascun" rightly spelled in the true edition, but misspelt as "chiascun," with an extra "h," in the reimpression. Three other

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words, at different pages and lines, were similarly to be distinguished. It was a small matter enough, but still there was a certain delightful exhilaration—the true book-hunting fervour—in the eagerness with which I turned to the particular volume, the precise page, the exact line, the *very* word, and there, to my joy, I found "ciascun" rightly spelt, *without the "h!"*

Then, again, there is a certain deep interest—an interest perhaps more human than literary—in the names we find written and sometimes scribbled on the margins of old books. I remember once buying a dirty little volume of commonplace Latin epigrams—not for the epigrams, but because there was written in old ink on the cover "contains the autograph of Vande Velde." The bookseller saw this too, but he was unable to throw light on where the autograph was, for it did not at once appear. I, however, took my chance of that, and without, I confess, having much interest in the signature of the Flemish painter, I looked for it repeatedly but in vain. It is now many years ago, but I have not yet been able to conquer the uneasy feeling that within these brown covers, *somewhere*, there exists the autograph of Vander Velde. For months I get over this feeling, but it unfailingly attacks me again, and I set to work to examine page after page and all round the edges to find the autograph which I fear has gone for ever.

Then there are the names of men whom we know more of than Vander Velde. I have a little volume of the minor Latin poets which came from the library of the author of "Rab and his Friends," Dr. John Brown

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of Edinburgh. It adds a deeper charm to such a book to know that it has been held in such kindly hands and has been perused by those gentle eyes that saw so far into the depths of human hearts. I have many volumes too with the autograph of John Hill Burton, the prince of book-hunters. But there is one little book that I prize higher than any of these in this connection. It is interesting in itself, for it is an Italian translation of an old Greek romance—a translation made from the MS., as the Greek text was not printed till a later date than the little volume bears. It is not for the contents, however, that I prize it, it is for a sentence written, and written twice, on the inner leaves, written in ink that has faded to a pale brown with age. The sentence is—"This book belonged to Dr. Goldsmith." Now I have no authority beyond that of the faint inscriptiou itself for saying that this statement is true, neither have I any reason to doubt it. The dates correspond, for the little book appeared in 1757, just after Goldsmith had come home from his wanderings and flutings in the byways of Europe to London. It was no doubt when the "Citizen of the World" had founded his fame and could buy fine clothes and books that this curious little work came into his hands. Has he shown it to Dr. Johnson? Have Sir Joshua and he nodded their wise heads over it? or was it a waif and stray in the struggling poet's garret, a gleam of sunshine perhaps in the wretched gloom and slavery and starvation that makes the literary history of the last century such a pitiful tale. No one, probably, can know its history now, but "this book belonged to Dr. Goldsmith." It is incidents like these that lend a

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human charm to the work of the book-hunter, and as there is no one so eager to find, so there is no one so careful to preserve these casual fragments of "days that are no more."

Surrounded by his books, the book-hunter is in a charmed circle within which there come no cries or echoes of to-day, but where the air is thick with fancies, where stately presences hold their silent session, and where, as in some great theatre, we hear the clash of the brazen-heeled Greek and the moan of the loud-resounding sea;" we hear the shouting, and see the splendour of a Roman triumph; we wander through the undiscovered forests of old with Percival or Galahad, while

> "Deep on the convent roof the snows
> Are sparkling to the moon;"

we hear the twangling of the troubadour's lute, and the passion of the full-throated nightingale; we can, by the turning of a page, wander from the blaze of battle that burns through the histories of the Edwards and the Henrys to the deep and delicate magic of Prospero's island, or the moonlit battlements of Elsinore. Did we line our walls with marble busts of the great men of old they might create for us an equal atmosphere of veneration for a time, but a bust is only a cunning block of marble—it is beautiful and great, but it will not speak to us. The lips are cold and silent, the eyes are motionless and sightless. It is not so with books. They are not really silent, they are not chary of their comfort, their love, their exhortation and their sympathy.

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They are as the spirits of the great whose frail human bodies have long vanished, but who, in the native force and dignity of humanity, still live on with us—our friends in weal or woe, the most priceless possession of our race.

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JOHN KEATS

IN the year 1817 there appeared a small volume of poems, which did not attract much attention. It was the work of a young man of 22 years of age. Less than four years afterwards—in February 1821—that young man died at Rome, where he had gone in the vain hope of recovering his lost health. In these four years, surely as short a time as was ever given to mortal to work out a literary immortality, John Keats managed, by the force and splendour of his poetic genius, to rank himself among the great personalities of English literature. It was only a few years ago that another great and kindred spirit passed away; but how different was his fortune! Lord Tennyson had reached the full limit of ordinary human life, his career had been peaceful, rich with great accomplishment, and crowned with well-won honour. Looking to what we owe to Tennyson, we cannot help asking ourselves — Had Keats lived, how much richer and fuller might our literature have been? It is idle to speculate on such questions, but the fact remains that there is no critic of real insight who will for a moment doubt that his brief life was but a glimpse into a great treasure house which death untimely closed to us; but a fragment, like one of those exquisite torsos of ancient Greek

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sculpture which confound our imaginations with dreams of what may have been their finished form.

To some minds Keats may not seem worthy of such praise as I have already given him. Fortunately, our tastes are various in this world. It would be a much duller place than it is if we all thought alike. But even to those who deny Keats the laurel of immortality it must at least be evident that the English literature of the nineteeth century has been largely influenced by his style, and that he—boy as he was—forms one of the hinges and turning points of its development.

The differences in individual taste in poetry or art—indeed in any subject that comes within the term æsthetics—are so great that it is practically almost impossible to reconcile them, or to produce any code of rules giving real guidance or meeting with anything like a general acceptance. The only thing left for a student of literature to do is to resort to the historical method of enquiry. He may like this poet and dislike another, he may feel a rapturous worship of one great painter, and experience an actual repulsion from the works of another, but these instinctive likes and dislikes form no sound basis of judgment unless he can show that they arise from something more than individual preference. It is difficult to find such a basis. But as good a foundation as any may be found by widening our view as far as possible, by studying poets not only in themselves but in relation to each other, in tracing the influences from which they sprang, and the effects they left behind them. This is something of a Darwinian form of criticism, and I am not quite

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sure how far it gives a final answer; but one comforting thing about literature is that we are far away from the anthropoid apes before we begin to speak of it at all.

Now, John Keats was interesting not only in himself, but because of the moment in literary history at which he appeared.

It is, perhaps, too much the habit of one century to decry that which immediately preceded it, just as a boy despises the toys of his childhood, or a man ceases to find delight in the catapults and tin soldiers of his boyhood. So it has been the habit of the nineteenth century to speak slightingly of the eighteenth. There is, however, one direction in which this feeling is justified —an advance has been made in the department of poetry within the last hundred years which no one can gainsay or deny. The eighteenth century, so far as poetry is concerned, was a period of darkness and death. At its commencement the great lights of Spenser, and Shakespeare, and Milton, had gone out. Life in England had settled into a dull groove. All the culture and enlightenment of the nation was concentrated in the capital cities. Men no longer took any pleasure in the world of nature. Few of them had any acquaintance with it at all. Almost all of them despised it. When Pope followed Dryden on the throne of English poetry, this revulsion of feeling from the old delights, and earlier ecstacies, became more marked. The very polish and brilliance of Pope's verse drew men's minds away from the natural glories of native song. His artificiality was so much in keeping with the sentiment of his day that he became the leader of a literary fashion

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and the founder of a school. Trained in that school, the Muses lost all their early graces. They began to powder their hair and to wear wigs and patches. They rushed indoors from the woods and fields; and, even in the drawing-rooms, which they loved, they simpered rather than sang. A great part of the poetry of the eighteenth century was mere *versification*. Few people read Pope now, still fewer read the poetical exercises of Dr Johnson. We find more poetry in Goldsmith's prose than in his verse. It is curious to note this ebb and flow of intellectual effort. We may call the Dark Ages a *negative*, and the Revival of Learing a *positive* period. So on a much smaller scale, and only in the name, the eighteenth century was a negative period. But no age, just as no person, can continue always negative—part of him keeps on asserting things. Towards the end of the century a great change began. Some say Thomson, some say Cowper, began it. There is little doubt that the "marvellous boy," Thomas Chatterton, had a good deal to do with it. In whatever way it was started, however, it is undoubted that the reaction from the cold formalities of versification found its chief exponents in Burns, and Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and Scott, and Keats. To such a group as this it may be objected that they represent as many schools of poetry as they have names, and that is true; but they had all one element in common—the element of expressing in poetry a new and fresh return to the glories of the natural world—a feeling that poetry had a higher aim and a higher scope than the conventionalities of society, or the thread-bare rules of an artificial and

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exhausted art. It is curious to notice, even in Burns, and in some of his most admired work, that the old leavening of the eighteenth century still clings to him, and some lines of stilted and absurd phraseology occur in the midst of his most passionate utterances.

Of course the new poetry that heralded and and accompanied the advent of our century became divided into schools. Just as a ray of light, when directed through a prism, breaks into red, and yellow, and blue, and green, so the literature of a time, or of a nation, when passed through a critic's analysis, shows itself compounded of elements of varied beauty—united only in so far as they are all parts of that "light that never was on sea or land."

The chief school of the new poetry was that of Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Southey—the Lake School, or "Lakers," as they were irreverently called. Wordsworth was so conscious of the change which he had so large a part in bringing about, that he formulated his theories into a regular philosophical system, and published them to the world. His poetry itself, however, was better than his system, and the one lives while the other is forgotten. In like manner Coleridge's metaphysical musings have not that ever-green vitality which clings to "Christabel," or the "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner." Byron and Scott belonged to the Romantic School, and in Moore and Campbell we had song and ballad makers of rare genius. But the school, or group, to which I wish to direct attention for a little, is different from all these. It has been called by various names. One of these was a very silly one,

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and was in almost every sense a misnomer. The school of Leigh Hunt, and of John Keats, has been called the *Cockney School.* Apart from the fact that these men lived for the most part in London, or its neighbourhood, and that, unfortunately, in one of his smaller poems, Keats made the name of one of the Graces "Thalia," rhyme with the adjective "higher"—a literary vice which in some circles in our own day is counted a virtue—there is, to my mind at least, no kind of justification for the name of the Cockney School. On the contrary, the whole tendency of their work was to take and give pure delight in the beauty of external nature, to enjoy, almost to worship, the trees, and the flowers, and the clouds, and the green fields. This love of nature amounted almost to a kind of fanciful pantheism in Keats, and instead of being allured or bound by the restrictions of city life, he did his utmost to fly from them. But it may be remarked that life in a great city has often been accompanied by a very genuine passion for the poetical expression of natural beauty. It may even intensify it. Thus, one of our own Scots poets—Alexander Smith—was one of the keenest observers of natural beauty, and he says of himself on this very subject—

> "City, I am true son of thine;
> Ne'er dwelt I where great mornings shine
> Around the bleating pens;
> Ne'er by the rivulets I strayed,
> And ne'er upon my childhood weighed
> The silence of the glens—
> Instead of shores where ocean beats
> I hear the ebb and flow of streets."

As far as John Keats is concerned, it may be said that

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no poet, except, perhaps, Tennyson, has held such familiar council as he with flower and stream, with green pastures and dark forests, and all the beautiful creatures that they hold.

Thus, our poetry, in a word, was brought back by the great singers of the dawn of this century from a vain formalism to a new, a real, a living perfection, founded on nature instead of convention; and with so much said by way of introduction, I will not longer delay a short sketch of the actual work left us by John Keats.

John Keats was born at Moorfields, London, on the 29th October, 1795. His grandfather and father had been keepers of a livery-stable establishment in that quarter. Both his father and mother died while he was yet in boyhood, and he and his two brothers and one sister were left to the care of relatives and friends. John was the eldest of the family, and after being at school for some time at Enfield, where he formed his life-long friendship with Charles Cowden Clarke, he was apprenticed to a surgeon at the age of 15. Very early, however, he had displayed literary tastes and habits which led him practically to give up the prospects of a medical career, and instead (having become one of the literary circle surrounding Leigh Hunt and the painter Haydon), he gave himself up almost entirely to poetry.

Personally, Keats was a short, rather thick set young man, with wavy brown hair, and remarkably bright and liquid eyes. Curiously enough, Rossetti says they were blue, while Cowden Clarke says they were light hazel. This is not, perhaps, of much consequence, but it is

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remarkable to notice how everyone seems to have been struck by the fine and sensitive expression of his face. One critic describes it as "an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight." The fragility of his body is well shown by the fact that on meeting him and shaking hands once at Hampstead, Coleridge turned to a friend and said, "There is death in that hand."

I have said that in the year 1817 his first work appeared. He had written before this some sonnets in Leigh Hunt's paper—the "Examiner." His first little work was dedicated to Hunt. It was in the following year, however—1818—that he published the poem which brought him fully before the world, and it was this poem which aroused that harsh criticism which has been supposed to have been so crushing in its effects, although in this respect I am inclined to think there has been a good deal of popular misconception. This poem was called "Endymion," and it remains still, if not the best, at least one of the most remarkable of his works—one which shows alike his weakness and his power—the exuberance of his genius, and the sustained richness of his fancy.

One word as to its subject. It was not the first, nor has it been the last occasion on which the story of Endymion has reappeared in English Literature. I say reappeared, because of course the subject is one drawn from that vast and glorious mine of intellectual beauty and interest—the Greek mythology. The main point in the story of Endymion is that he was a youth of high birth and great beauty, who fell, or was put to sleep on Mount Latmos, and with

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whom Selene, or the moon, fell in love. It is the custom now—and probably it is a custom founded upon a very deep-lying truth—to find philosophical meanings in all the stories which were told in the youth of the world, as well as those which we heard in our own childhood. Folk-lore, Comparative Mythology, and kindred studies have left little of the fiction of childhood untouched. This is no doubt a great gain in many ways, but as we are not all anthropologists—at least until we have been to school—it is just possible that this kind of thing may go too far. I think it was Sidney Smith who made a very true remark when he pointed out that there is a good deal of intellectual confusion in our way of dealing with those people whom we call "the ancients." We are apt to suppose that "the ancients" were very wise and very learned people. The general idea of them is of hoary-headed sages and mysteriously solemn personages. Now, the very reverse is really the case. It is we who are really the *ancients*. We have lived by our ancestors much longer in the world than they did. It is *we* who inherit the accumulated knowledge of ages. The world *we* look upon is thousands of years older than theirs, and therefore it is we who ought to be solemn and learned. And to a great extent this is really so. There is no doubt that we have lost a good deal of the freshness—I was going to say the childishness—of the ancients, and thus it is that we are perhaps apt to attribute to them a solemnity of purpose to which they may not always be entitled. Some of this feeling no doubt comes to us from the experiences of our school days, when it seemed that of

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all irreconcilable things, the two most irreconcilable were a fairy story or tale of adventure on the one hand, and a passage of Greek or Latin prose on the other. The one was full of charm and delight to us, the other was—well, it was, to say the least, somewhat interrupted by the laws of syntax, and encumbered by irregular verbs. But, all the same, these stories are there for us children of a larger growth, who have learnt our syntax, and can look a moderately irregular verb in the face. It is there, the freshness, the first-hand beauty, of the Juventus Mundi, and therein lies a great part of charm of ancient languages that we find it so difficult to get schoolboys to believe in.

It was such a story that seized on the young imagination of Keats. Strangely enough, it took hold upon him before he had got much mastery of the merely mechanical part of learning. Much of his knowledge of the ancient world was imbibed from translations. But such is the power of lucid penetration in minds of the first water, such is the strength of poetic sympathy, with all that is beautiful, in a poet's heart that he speaks to us almost like a new Theocritus, and the enchanted world, into which he leads us, is filled with the light that lies upon the slopes of Olympus, and over all the islands of Ionian seas.

One great help he had in our old dramatists. There are echoes every here and there of Elizabethan richness in his speech, and from Chapman, and Ben Jonson, and Marlowe, he caught some of their fire and splendour of epithet. The first of these—Chapman (the translator of Homer)—was indeed avowedly his guide and herald

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into the world of ancient Greece. I cannot do better than quote the lines which Keats himself wrote "on first looking into Chapman's Homer":—

> "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken,
> Or like stout Cortes when, with eagle eyes,
> He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

It was a new world—a new ocean! But the delicate London boy was not long in launching his bark on its bewitching waves.

There was one other of the old English dramatists who had treated of the story of Endymion, but I do not suppose that Keats caught much inspiration from him. Almost everybody has heard of John Lilly, the author of "Euphues," the sweet-spoken playwright, whose stilted, yet elegant eloquence, became the rage among the courtiers of Queen Elizabeth. Lilly's "Endymion" bears the date 1591, and was written, in all probability, when its author was in the prime of his literary power. The original title was as follows:—"Endimion, the Man in the Moone, play'd before the Queen's Majestie at Greenwich on Candlemas day at night, by the children of Paules."

I have said that Keats probably drew little inspiration, if any, from this drama, for the style and character of the work are entirely different from his. Lilly writes as a man of the world, keen in satire, behind whose smooth and artificially-planned speeches there is, almost always, a sound of mocking laughter. Lilly's poem is, of course, dramatic in form; Keats is narrative. Lillys'

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plot is intricate; that of Keats is very simple, or rather, very dim, and ill arranged. Indeed "Endymion" may be said to be a poem with no plot to speak of, and I am afraid I must add, without any conspicuous moral.

Let us look at the first book. The plot of that book, if plot it can be called, consists in this, that a young hunter or chieftain, who resides in some dimly-designed country on the slopes of Mount Latmos, has fallen in love with a semi-divine image of Cynthia—a presence which flies from him, and yet breaks up his peace of mind—and even his health of body, for when we meet him he is pining away. There is a great festival being held among the forest people—an altar is erected to the great god Pan, and a hymn is sung in his praise. Endymion retires from the scene, and his sister, Peona, tries to comfort him.

The language in which these simple facts are told introduced a new element into English literature. The very first line of the poem has become immortal, has embedded itself in the very fibre of our intellectual life.

> "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
> It's loveliness increases, it will never
> Pass into nothingness, but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

This is a text from which many a discourse might be delivered. It is the keynote of Keats's poetry. It is not my purpose, however, to discuss the questions it opens up—of the relations between the good and the beautiful, of the utilitarian ends, which are served along with others, by the cultivation of the beautiful. Everything now-a-days apparently must have a *utilitarian*

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end before people will listen to it. If Socrates were alive—and it is a pity such people must die—he would probably have put questions to our utilitarians. He would have said, "utilitarian means useful—useful for what?" And if someone, after a pause, had suggested *happiness*, he would have asked again, "what is happiness?" Are we then all Epicureans? Enough that John Keats proclaimed his doctrine and proceeded to act upon it without any insistence of moral purpose. He was not much of a moral philosopher, except in the sense that every great artist is such, however far apart we choose to place the two phases of thought. Some of Keat's moralizings seem very thin and confused; he is his own best self when he turns to narrative and description.

"Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
A mighty forest, for the moist earth fed
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
Into o'erhanging boughs and precious fruits.
And it had gloomy shades, sequester'd deep,
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep
A lamb strayed far adown those inmost glens,
Never again he saw the happy pens
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
Over the hills at every nightfall went.

. . . . . .

Who could tell
The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Edged round with dark tree-tops? through which a dove
Would often beat its wings, and often, too,
A little cloud would move across the blue."

Into this glade come a happy company, and Endymion riding on his car. Amid all the festival, he alone is sad. After the altar is heaped with offerings, a song or chorus is sung in honour of Pan.

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Pan was one of the important personages of the Greek mythology—a late creation, with a confused history, but generally accepted as the god of woods and fields, of flocks and herds, a strange, horned, and goat-footed creature, whose favour brought wealth and happiness to the shepherd, and whose wrath—which was very fierce, as we learn from Theocritus—was much to be dreaded, especially if one disturbed his noon-day slumbers in the woods. The exquisite imagery of this *chorus*, reminding one of the Greek in its mellifluous music—well expresses the character of the being to whom it was addressed:—

"O thou whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lovest to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth,
Bethinking thee how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,
By thy love's milky brow!
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan!" &c.

A dance follows

"To the swift treble pipe and humming string."

And when all the young company are seated on the grass, Endymion, pale and wearied, falls asleep. His sister, Peona, comes and takes him away in a little shallop to a "bowery island," where they have a long conversation, in the course of which Endymion tells Peona of this magical new love that has come upon him. It would be quite impossible, by the mere

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quotation of lines here and there, to give any real impression of the beauty of the imagery which flows from the pen of Keats almost unwittingly and unchecked. Indeed, it may be said that there is too much sweetness in Endymion—it is too full, too crowded with colour and fragrance, with the sheen of fancy and corruscations of a rich but disordered brilliance. But taken alongside any of the dry and stilted platitudes of the century that preceded it, it is full of new life and light. I do not mean to go through the whole poem of Endymion, but there are one or two passages which I cannot help referring to.

I suppose there are few poets who have not addressed impassioned verses to the moon. Why this should be, it is perhaps not so easy to say. Astronomers tell us—and we generally believe astronomers, because we are not able to contradict them—that the moon is a vast cinder wheeling through space, its arid mountains casting their shadows in the silence of death—its weird plains unawakened by a whisper of speech, or a movement of any life. There is not much, therefore, in the moon herself to attract the poet. But, like many other people and things, her charms are enhanced by distance, and the bright silver crescent that looks at us from the sky, when everything else is wrapped in darkness in the purity and solemnity of night, has a constant attraction for the poet's eye. But when the moon herself—Cynthia, Diana, by whatever name you call her—is in fact the heroine of the story which the poet has got to tell us, there is less wonder at his ecstacy. So with Keats, the moon is his heroine—the poem is conceived

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in her praise. There is, of course, the old joke about those who show too much fondness for the moon. But that old word (Luna) in connection with poets has high sanction. It is Shakespeare himself who says—

> " The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact."

Leaving the lover out of account, because his derangement is of a kind that, as a rule, is easily and rapidly cured, we may say that a permanent characteristic of the poetic mind is the *creating, bodying forth* of forms, and images, and ideas, that do not otherwise exist. This, as a disease, may perhaps be lunacy, but though all lunatics in a way may be called poets, it does not follow that all poets are lunatics. Because all donkeys are four-footed animals, it does not follow that all four-footed animals are donkeys!

> " O Moon! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees
> Feel palpitations when thou lookest in.
> O moon, old boughs lisp forth a holier din
> The while they feel thine airy fellowship,
> Thou dost bless everywhere, with silver lip
> Kissing dead things to life, the sleeping kine
> Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine:
> Innumerable mountains rise and rise,
> Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes." &c.

> " What is there in thee, Moon! that thou should'st move
> My heart so potently? When yet a child
> I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smiled."

I have indicated that it is nearly impossible to give the story of Endymion as a connected narrative. The plot, or " fable," as the French call it, is very thin and complicated. The poem resembles nothing so much as a dream—a gorgeous phantasmagoria, one part of which seems to grow out of the other, as dreams do, without

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any reasoned connection, and only at the bidding of an intensely beautiful and creative, but quite untrained imagination. One of our best critics—Mr. David Macbeth Moir (who wrote under the pseudonym of Delta)—says of Endymion, "The work is a perfect mosaic of bright tints, and graceful forms, despotically commingled, almost without plan or congruity, so that we often lose the thin thread of the story altogether in the fantastic exuberance of ornament and decoration. Ever and anon, however, we come to bits of exquisite beauty—patches of deep, serene, blue sky, amid the rolling clouds, which compel us to pause in admiration—glimpses of nature full of tenderness and truth—touches of sentiment deep as they are delicate."

Before passing from "Endymion," I should like to notice one or two other passages.

In the third book we have the story of Glaucus, the strange old man that Endymion comes upon at the bottom of the sea, and of the wicked enchantress who has turned her lovers into wild beasts.

> "Seated upon an uptorn forest root,
> And all around her shapes, wizard, and brute,
> Laughing and wailing, grovelling, serpenting,
> Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting.
> O such deformities!"

The whole story is full of beautiful lines. The dead lovers were awakened by a counter spell wrought by Endymion, and as each dead body awoke into new life—

> "Death fell aweeping in his charnel-house."

In the last book, Keats introduces one of those Odes,

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full of deep feeling, which have done more than anything else to preserve his name and fame. It occurs at a weird and wondrous period of the story, where the changing splendours of the dream have been so striking as almost to awake us. It is an ode to sorrow:—

"O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The natural hue of health from vermeil lips?—
To give maiden blushes
To the white rose bushes?
Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The lustrous passion from a falcon eye?—
To give the glow-worm light,
Or, on a moonless night,
To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea spray?

O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?—
To give at evening pale
Unto the nightingale
That thou mayest listen the cold dews among?

. . . . . .

To Sorrow
I bade good-morrow,
And thought to leave her far away behind,
But cheerly, cheerly,
She loves me dearly;
She is so constant to me, and so kind,
I would deceive her,
And so leave her,
But ah! she is so constant, and so kind."

This reminds us of the 59th canto of "In Memoriam"—it reminds us of Chatterton and of Shakespeare—it reminds us, in fact, of things that are too great for us to wholly forget. To those who never read a verse of

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poetry it comes like a familiar voice—so true is it that the common-place man is not half so common-place as he pretends to be. We may try to deceive people into thinking that we have no poetical feelings, but we deceive ourselves more readily than others.

There may be some people to whom the writing of a poem like "Endymion" is a piece of meaningless folly. What they want from a poet is practical advice—stinging sarcasms that start their brains working—or jingling music that makes them keep time with their feet. They will find none of these in Keats.

Our compassion, however, for people who don't read poetry is perhaps thrown away—as much thrown away as is our compassion for our poor friends in the Antipodes, who, at this moment, are going about their usual avocations—upside down. What is up to them is down to us, and what is up to us is down to them. If we both went deep enough, no doubt we would come to a common centre.

It is a fine and subtle air that is breathed in the regions of imaginative poesy, such as this of Keats. It does not tell us anything directly, but it influences us like an atmosphere. And through it all, like haunting melodies of a younger time, there is the glorious music of Theocritus and Catullus, the pipe of Tityrus beneath the Mantuan beech trees, and the trampling of a Paladin's horse through the unexplored forests that are startled with the blowing of Orlando's horn. That is the region of romance, that is the land of imagination.

You will remember that it was in the spring of 1818 that Keats published "Endymion." Before it was given

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to the world he had written another great work. It is of a somewhat different type from Endymion, and is much more constrained and more finished. It is not less beautiful. This was his poem of "Isabella or the Pot of Basil."

If you have seen a very fine picture by Mr. Holman Hunt of Isabella and her Pot of Basil, you will know the story already, for the painter has told it with his brush. I don't know whether Holman Hunt took his immediate inspiration from Keats or from the earlier Italian original, but this brings me to a point on which I should like to say a few words, although a whole lecture might very readily be devoted to the subject. I mean the influence of Italian literature upon English literature.

The illumination that brought the dark ages to an end was lit in Italy; the revival of learning took place in Italy; the cultivation of the fine arts at their finest was carried on in Italy. Italy is the artistic and literary mother of Europe, and of England to a large extent also. France, too, had a large influence upon our earlier literature, partly, no doubt, owing to our close national connection with that country. It is surprising how many foreign origins we find when we come to look at the work even of our greatest writers. To begin with Chaucer. Most of his tales are taken from the French *fabliaux*. You are aware that early French literature was divided into two great schools—the Troubadours of the south, and the Trouvères of the north. From the Troubadours of the langue d' d'oc came songs, and chansons, and ballads, from the less romantic

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and more discursive writers of the langue d'oïl in the north came stories written in verse, which are known as *Fabliaux*. Almost all Chaucer's stories are of this kind; some of his poems are very French in form and character. These same stories were told in Italy. Gradually they took more definite shape and were written as *novelle*. Now, take Shakespeare. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is told by two of the Italian novelists. *Measure for Measure* is Italian. *Much Ado about Nothing* we find in Ariosto and Bandello. *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Merchant of Venice*, and others, are all Italian stories. I do not, of course, mean to say that Shakespeare borrowed much, or translated at all from these stories. I do not suppose he could have read a sentence of Italian. But there were English translations even in his day, and he did not seem to care much where his material came from, so long as it formed a suitable framework for his marvellous imaginative powers. There are many traces too in Milton and Spenser of Italian influence. Apart from these things, it was Italy that opened up the past, and restored the Greek and Latin languages. To some of the poets of Italy we owe the priceless boon of having rescued for us from utter darkness and neglect, the masterpieces of the ancient world. It is a debt that can never be repaid, and is too seldom remembered.

It was one of these Italian stories that Keats took next in hand. It is a story told in the ninth novel of the third book of the "Decamerone." Most of them were tragic—many, of course, were quite foreign to the taste or manner of the present day—this one of Isabella is of

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almost unbroken sadness. Isabella lived with her two brothers in Florence. They were rich merchants, and wanted her to marry some one of their own kind. She, however, had fixed her affections upon young Lorenzo. The wicked brothers took a short way with him—they slew him, and buried him in a wood. In the midst of sorrow for his absence, Lorenzo's ghost came to Isabella, and told the tale. She went to the wood, found the body, cut off her lover's head, brought it home with her, and put it, wrapped in costly spices, in a jar beneath the roots of a plant of Sweet Basil. The brothers stole the pot from her, but on finding the buried face beneath of their victim, they fled from Florence, and left Isabella to die of loneliness, crying to the last for her "pot of Basil."

This is a clearer and more defined plot than that of the visionary "Endymion." These old Italians were indeed very clear in their notions,—they were subtle, and not easily deceived,—they were avid of new pleasures. Living in the midst of a thoroughly corrupt society, they took delight in the literary treatment of crime. Their stories are all of sword-slaughters, and poisonings, and hair-breadth escapes. The old Italian nature is intense, but it wants breadth. We, of cooler blood, and healthier brain, in these days, find little pleasure in all this; but there can be little doubt that it gave a splendid field for the exhibition of the literary development of character and emotion, for the display of motives, and the presentment of human beings in dramatic connection with each other. This was probably its charm for Shakespeare. Purified and ennobled in the alembic of

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his genius, these stories became priceless treasures. I confess I sometimes like to turn to writings of this kind from the perusal of some of the twaddle of society novels which are published in our own day. If these tragedies tire you, or disgust you, you can throw them away as there is nobody now to be offended, but you have to read the twaddle.

Keats' poem of "Isabella" was not written in the same metre as "Endymion." It was more like a poem of Spenser's, or what we have been accustomed to from Byron, or Scott, or Campbell. It reminds us a little of Tennyson's "Mariana in the Moated Grange."

"With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir
But her full shape would all his being fill;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her than noise of trees or hidden rill;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same."

The 38th stanza brings to our mind the old ballad of "William and Margaret," or of "Clerk Saunders."

"The clinking bell went thro' the toun,
To carry the dead corse to the clay,
And Clerk Saunders stood at Mey Margaret's window
An hour, I wot, before the day."

She puts her lover's head in a pot of Basil.

"There is a silken scarf—sweet with the dews
Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully—
She wrapped it up; and for its tomb did choose
A garden pot, wherein she laid it by,

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And covered it with mould, and o'er it set
Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, the sun,
And she forget the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze—
She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not; but in peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moistened it with tears unto the core."

. . . . . .

"O cruelty,
To steal my Basil-pot away from me!"

With that cry the poem comes to an end. It is slight enough, but there are lines here and there that strike us deeply. It shows a great advance, as far as mere art-workmanship goes, over the loose verse of "Endymion."

Almost a year afterwards, Keats wrote a third poem of some length. Nothing as yet had been published except "Endymion," and that had been received with a hostile demonstration from the "Quarterly Review." A good deal of exaggeration has been indulged in over this matter. The criticism was undoubtedly harsh, but I do not think it had very much effect upon Keats. In the case of a strong poet it seldom has. Keats was of strong fibre, as many incidents in his life showed, and he had that abundant belief in his own immortality which, while no doubt offensive in smaller souls, is the very life and making of a man of genius. His mind was, as Byron said, "a very fiery particle," but it did not let itself be "snuffed out by an article."

The next poem was "The Eve of St. Agnes." It is written in the Spenserian stanza. We are here away from the Greek mythology. We are away from Italian

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tragedies. We are plunged in the rich light of a love-tale of mediæval romance. A young lady is stolen away by her lover on a night when she had made her plans to see visions—like the country people in Burns' poem of "Hallowe'en." St. Agnes' Eve was in the depth of winter.

"St. Agnes' Eve. Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the beadman's fingers while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven without a death
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith."

The opening stanzas, and those describing Madeline's chamber, are enough to show the character of the poem, the beauty of the language, the wealth of descriptive colour and epithet, the way in which Keats makes us *see* a thing. This power of presentment, of actually causing an image to pass before the mind, as full and as beautiful as an actual visual experience, is one of the chief witcheries of poetry. It does not depend on elaboration of description—no amount of care, or pains, or industry will produce it, it comes from the power of *selection*, which is the great secret of an artist in words. Perhaps the greatest master in this department of art that has ever existed was the late Lord Tennyson. The intensity and truth of his perceptive and presentative power is sometimes almost "fearsome." His words sometimes strike us like those sudden pictures that come into the mind of a half-forgotten

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existence lived somewhere long ago, but which vanish again before we can catch or retain them. Sometimes it is impossible to tell what word it is that fascinates us, or even which line, but the magic is there all the same. In this and in other respects I think there can be little doubt that Tennyson was largely influenced by Keats.

The impression conveyed by this presentative power is of course, in its essence, dependent upon *truth of observation.* A thing must be accurately, appreciatively, one might say lovingly, observed before it can be reproduced with this marvellous intensity. So the poets of the eighteenth century who did not observe anything correctly, and had flat, threadbare phrases for everything, have almost no presentative power.

The next of Keats's larger poems, and it is his last and perhaps his greatest, is "Hyperion." Here again there is a change of versification. "Hyperion" is written in blank verse. I think it is a safe prediction that, if he had lived, Keats's best work would have been done in this medium. A writer in blank verse is freed from the tendency which is almost inevitable when writing in rhyme, to make the rhyme suggest the meaning. This was one of the accusations against Keats in his "Endymion." In that poem it may have been here and there justified, and at the same time excused from the slightness of the theme, but in "Hyperion" it disappears altogether.

In this poem Keats goes back to the Greek mythology. It is not this time, however, a gentle tale of love or human emotion—it is the Titanic story of the

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early gods. You are aware that the Jupiter or Zeus, of whom we hear so much in the ancient theology, was not by any means the oldest of the gods, nor did he always reign upon Olympus. An earlier race, the Titans, sons of "Ouranos" and "Gæa," had rebelled against their own father, and, headed by Saturn or Kronos, had set up a new sovereignty in heaven. Saturn again was deposed by his son Jupiter, and, along with all the older race of Titans, was overthrown and imprisoned. It is on this far-off, elemental scene that the poem of "Hyperion" opens. We feel here as if a newer and grander influence had overspread the sensitive nature of the poet. We are no longer in the enchanted woods of Spenser, or in the gay and passionate world of Italian stories—we feel in reading "Hyperion" as if we were walking hand in hand with Milton and Michael Angelo. The canvass is immensely large, the figures are Titans—the scene and air are those of dim, untravelled space, and infinitely remote time. It was a bold attempt for so young a singer, and as the poem is unfinished—indeed it is a mere fragment—we are unable to judge fully whether his genius would have proved equal to the task. It is of course impossible to tell the course which his narrative would have taken, but he has given us one or two pictures of great strength and beauty and full of the grandest outlines. The whole poem is instinct with sublimest desolation.

The opening picture of the dethroned Saturn is one which is almost perfect.

"Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,

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Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deaden'd more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the naiad thro' her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips."

The picture of the fallen Titans, and the speech of Enceladus in particular is very fine. It might have been written by Milton.

I have now, in what I fear, is a very imperfect manner, indicated what constitutes the main work of the poet Keats. It is not always, however, in his largest works that a poet is at his best, and this is true of our poet. Besides the works I have mentioned, Keats left a number of lesser poems, odes and sonnets, all of which have been preserved with loving care by his biographer, Lord Houghton.

It is in these little poems, these occasional pieces, as they may be called, that we see Keats perhaps at his best. He is not hampered by narrative, or by the construction of plot, he sings spontaneously, like a bird. There are many poetical epistles addressed to his friends which contain beautiful pictures of natural scenery, and thoughts that seem to spring from them as naturally as wild flowers in an English meadow. One or two of these occasional poems take the form of odes. The ode has always been a favourite form with English poets. The variety of metre which it allows, and the sustained

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level of lyrical feeling which it demands are suitable to the genius of poets who work in perhaps the finest and richest of all languages. Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn," "to Melancholy," and "to Psyche" are singularly beautiful even among English odes, but the poem which perhaps has carried his name furthest, and which is likely to live longest, is his "Ode to a Nightingale."

There is one other little poem which I should like to mention, and it has long been a favourite of my own, and seems, in its very essence, to form a kind of colophon to the poetry of Keats. It is very short and simple, but it contains an idea of great solemnity and pathos; it seems to express the vanity of human hopes, the irrevocableness of human destiny, and the inability of even poetry itself to console the human heart for sorrows that transcend the changes of the natural world.

"In a drear-nighted December
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity:
The north cannot undo them
With a sleety whistle through them;
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.
In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many
A gentle girl and boy!
But were there ever any

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Writhed not at passèd joy?
To know the change and feel it,
When there is none to heal it,
Nor numbed sense to steal it,
Was never said in rhyme."

These sad lines seem almost prophetic of the young poet's end, for already, before the poems we have been speaking of had seen the light, the shadow of death was darkening around him.

It was in 1817, as we have seen, that his first volume was published. In the summer of 1820 his last volume saw the light, containing "Isabella," "Lamia," "The Eve of St. Agnes," and "Hyperion," but by that time Keats was so far gone in the terrible malady that afflicted him, that he determined, on the advice of his friends, to try the milder air of Italy. He was particularly fortunate in the friend whom he found to accompany him—Mr. Joseph Severn, a young painter, whose care and devotion to the poet will ever be remembered.

He left England in September, 1820. On arriving at Naples, he received an invitation from Shelley, who was then at Pisa, to come and visit him, which, however, he was unable to accept. He went to Rome, and was there tended by his friend Severn with the most touching devotion, but all was of no avail. He died on the 23rd of February, 1821, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery, where his friends and admirers have erected a modest monument to his memory. A nobler epitaph has seldom been written than the beautiful threnody, called "Adonais," in which Shelley mourned his dead friend.

There, beneath the blue Italian skies, and within the

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time-honoured walls of the eternal city, lies this English lad, who, had he lived, might now have been blazoned among the Shakespeares and the Miltons of our literature, but who, although he had not this fortune, has at least the reward of being enshrined deep in the affections of all who love English letters.

That Keats had faults, it is needless to deny. But who, of our greatest, dying at 25, would have left a memory so full of promise? His faults and failings are forgotten in the splendour of his achievement, in the haunting melodies with which he has enriched our language; and as the violets in spring come, year by year, upon his grave by the crumbling walls of Honorius, so will his undying memory in English song outlast the palaces of the Cæsars.

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ROMANCE

THERE is perhaps no word in the language more difficult of definition than romance. It embraces the highest intellectual truth and the most ridiculous and childish fable. Generally speaking, and roughly speaking, it means the imaginative world which surrounds the facts of life—and in its better sense, the selection from that world by highly gifted minds, of those imaginations which contain the highest ends and most glorious aims, and which give rise to the noblest emotions. It is not *imagination*—for imagination is the term applied to the intellectual bodying forth of things which, although they never have actually existed, might have existed, and which by their truth for the moment flatter our self-delusion into the belief that they have existed. Romance is only one *form* of imagination, a department so to speak in that great warehouse of the mind where strange articles are kept and a curious atmosphere prevails. To many it is a locked cabinet, to others an absurd toy-shop, the goods in which are only fit for babies—for there are moral and intellectual babies as well as natural and physical. To some again it is a drug-shop, full of spirits and stimulants. To most men of healthy brain and of true moral fibre it is a place of innocent and even of ennobling

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enjoyment, where the cares of life, "the weariness, the fever and the fret," can for a moment be laid aside in a world that charms their senses, strengthens their hearts, clears their intellects, and gives that rest to the mind which is no less restorative than the natural sleep of the body. In these days there is too little intellectual rest —we are so eager to reap rich and repeated crops that we forget the wisdom of lying fallow for a while. And so our intellects, like some of the best regulated machines, begin, after long use, to exhibit eccentricities which startle their owner; and for want of a little rest, and a little oil, and for want of an almost make-believe taking down and setting up again, get permanently injured. A moderate indulgence in literary romance resembles somewhat closely this process of taking to pieces and refitting. We throw ourselves into a world that never existed, the dust of our common labour falls from us, and we are bathed in "the light that never was on sea or land"—we sail on unknown seas to unfamiliar coasts—we who can scarcely, as a rule, summon courage to crush a blue-bottle on the window pane, find ourselves wielding the brand Excalibur with Arthur, or beating back the paynim hordes from the holy places of the east. And when we come back from these high emprises, and these doughty deeds, and find ourselves in our own arm-chair again, we smile at all the little clouds that had so clustered round us as to make a darkness in our minds, we feel awakened and refreshed as a man does when he comes from his cold morning plunge. It is like the taking down of machinery, because new conditions are suggested to us

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and imposed upon us. If we surrender ourselves to the romancer's power, we are unsettled entirely from our base, the demon of habit is chained up and forgotten, the same causes do not produce their accustomed effects, new and brilliant combinations fall together in the kaleidoscope of our experience, the air is no longer laden with our breathing, but blows fresh from between the stars, and we for a moment are as happy as mortals may be. Passion and praise, glory and blame, sweetness and bitterness, care, and pain, and joy, all these are notes in the magic flute of romance, and with its melody in our hearing, and once within its charm, we can but follow it, in laughter, or in tears, wherever it may lead.

So universal in all times and among all peoples is the love of romance, that a history of romance would take the place almost of a history of human civilization. Like the page of some ancient chronicle where the loving labour of the historian has been aided by the beautiful creations of the illuminator and the artist, every leaf of human history has its borderland of romance glowing and throbbing with beauty round the hard black statements of accomplished events, full of infinite suggestion, and alive with the conceptions of gentle minds whose exuberance could not be contained within the square letter of fact, gemmed with pictures here and there, or elsewhere, so emblazoned that, like Gareth before the gates of Arthur's Hall, we seem to gaze till

> "The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings
> Begin to move, and seethe, and twine, and curl."

Now if these were only "dragon-boughts and elvish

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emblemings" and if they only seemed to "seethe and twine and curl," we should have little warrant in indulging our wayward fancy with their magic charms. But if we begin our history of romance by asking on what intellectual basis, if any, or on what foundation of fact (again, if any,) the conception of romance rests, we find that the world of wonder, so to speak, exists as really as does the world of fact.

How little do we know of the secrets of the external world! Day by day, inch by inch, our sight is getting clearer and broader, and yet, day by day, we are influenced by laws and powers which we cannot define; night by night, we are surrounded by a visible universe of which we know little, in which our world hangs as a particle of dust in a sunbeam. One odd way of figuring to ourselves the world of romance is to suppose ourselves for a moment transformed into creatures of a different type. Suppose that we were beetles crawling through the grass—what a curious world it would be! Those huge palms, those untrimmed logs and enormous boulders and these precipices of stone, along the edge of which we have to crawl; what a wild and terrible world full of giant shapes that move above us, and ravenous birds, as big as clouds, that are hungering for our life. What a silly imagination! some may say; and yet it is one that gives us a moment of intellectual amusement and rest. In another view it is as though we had reclaimed so much land from the primeval forest; we have hewed away much, we have cleared and cleansed, and we have enough to live upon in decent ease, but we shall not for that throw down our bill-hook and spade altogether, nor

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shall we cease to pry now and again into the jungle where the wild beasts are, and the strange flowers, or try to get past even these to the mountain peaks beyond.

But I have perhaps used enough of figurative language —the subject is one that tempts to such indulgence— and must come to the facts about romance, if such an expression will hold together.

I do not intend to go beyond the peoples or the civilization of Europe. If one were to go into the history of peoples whose very existence is perhaps a romance, he would get involved in such a concatenation of romances within romances as occurs in some of the Arabian tales, where it requires an effort of memory to remember what person is telling a story that forms part of a tale in a previous romance that is told in a story occurring in the course of a former narrative related by somebody else.

The Greeks, although imaginative, were not a romantic people. They were an exact and practical race. The ballad poetry (if we may so call it) which has come down to us in Epic form in the verse of Homer may lay some claim to this title, but there is wanting, to some degree at least, the keen sense of enjoyment and appreciation of the external and natural world that came into being with the younger nations. The great dramatists, too, seem too heavily laden with a sense of human woe and human destiny—of the fate which follows conduct like an avenging deity—to overflow in spontaneous excursions into the wonder-world of romance. The hard, cold, yet faultlessly beautiful lines of their marble temples, the purity of their unclouded sky, the mighty

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problems of pure hard thinking which occupied their greatest minds and drew around them all the most intelligent spirits among their youth, seemed to exclude the idea of that blind spirit of exploration and adventure, often purposeless enough, in which the northern nations sought outlet for their ungovernable vigour, their ill-defined objects, their fierce hatreds, and fierce loves. It is true that we have what are called Greek romances, but they were the fruits of a very late period and were the work of artificial rhetoricians, who for all the pleasure that they are able to impart might very well have spared their efforts. The effect of these compositions on the mind of anyone who has read or tried to read them —at least in my opinion—will infallibly be one of blank disappointment. The Romans of the classic times were little better than the Greeks, if indeed they were as good. It is again not till late in the history of Latin literature that we come upon any fragments and attempts at romantic story, but again it can only be said that those of them which are not utterly worthless are exceedingly dull and uninteresting.

It is a far cry from the Græco-Roman world to that of mediæval chivalry, and yet it is in this latter age that romance comes to possess the hearts and imaginations of the people of Europe. It is very difficult indeed to trace the origin of the various romances or cycles of romances which are associated with the intellectual life of this period. They are subject roughly to a certain geographical classification, and there are centres among them round which have accumulated as it were auxiliary groups of tales and poems; but, in course of time, these

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groups got a good deal confused together, and are not now easily separated or analysed. The main centres round which the romantic legend circled at this time were undoubtedly King Arthur of Britain, Charlemagne the Emperor, Amadis de Gaul, and some others.

The main theme of all this class of romance is the celebration of rare and unconquerable courage in man and beauty in woman. Self-devotion to great ends is perhaps the highest moral principle we can perceive in them, and that is not a constant factor, but in some instances it is rarely and beautifully pictured to us in the glowing words of the romancist. The true and perfect service of those to whom obedience is due, constancy in peril, courage moral and physical, a spirit of ambition and adventure—these are some of the fruits which the moralist can gather in the garden of mediæval romance, but they are unfortunately mingled with many weeds. But better than any disquisition on what truths or sentiment these romances contain will perhaps be an attempt to show you or to remind you what they actually have to say for themselves. The group of Arthurian romances is of course familiar to you all through the noble and exquisite form in which they have been clothed for modern minds by the greatest poet of the century—Tennyson in his "Idylls of the King." In his "Address to the Queen" at the end of the Idylls, the Poet Laureate indicates that his version of the old stories is wrought to higher purpose than the old chroniclers.

> "Accept," he says, "this old imperfect tale,
> New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul
> Rather than that grey king, whose name a ghost,

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> Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
> And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him
> Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's," &c.

These last words refer to Geoffrey of Monmouth, a monkish chronicler, who became Bishop of St. Asaph, and died about 1154, leaving behind him a chronicle which appears to consist more of romance than of real history, through undoubtedly it does contain a certain portion of fact, and Sir Thomas Mallory or Malleor, an author who compounded (apparently from old French sources) a long and elaborate "History of King Arthur" As a quaint introduction to the study of romances, perhaps one could not have a happier preface than that which Caxton prefixed to his edition. In this work, the principal character is, of course, King Arthur, but he is surrounded by all his knights, and each one has adventures of his own. With most of these, we are familiar in a general way. We have Sir Tristram, Sir Lancelot, Sir Galahad, Sir Gawaine, Sir Gareth, Sir Kay, and so forth. Among other characters are Merlin, the enchanter, King Mark, King Lot of Orkney, and so forth. We have the story of the wondrous sword Excalilbur, which King Arthur obtained from the Lady of the Lake. It is worth perhaps taking this last incident as a specimen of Mallory's quaint yet very direct, vivid, and flowing narrative :—

"Right so the King and he departed, and went unto an hermitage, whereat was a good man and a great leach. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave good salves, and the King was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended that he might ride and go. And so Merlin and he departed, and as they rode, King Arthur said, 'I have no sword.' 'No force,' said Merlin, 'hereby is a sword that shall

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be yours and I may.' So they rode till they came to a lake, which was a fair water, and a broad, and in the midst of the lake King Arthur was ware of an arm, clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in the hand. 'Lo,' said Merlin to the King, 'yonder is the sword that I spake of.' With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake. 'What damsel is that?' said the King. 'That is the Lady of the Lake,' said Merlin, 'and within the lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any is on earth, and richly beseen, and this damsel will come to you anon, and then speak fair to her that she will give you the sword,'" &c., &c.

It was on his marriage with Guinevere, according to Mallory, that Arthur received as her dowry the Table Round, which his father-in-law had had from his own father, Uter Pendragon. He received the table, and with it 100 knights. It was seated for 150 knights, and presumably the round form was adopted to prevent the occurrence of questions of precedence. In the quaint frontispiece to the "Morte d'Arthur," the King is seated in what appears to be an opening in the middle of the table. How he got there, or got out again, except by the undignified process of crawling under the table, does not clearly appear. We are instructed, however, by the chronicler, in his 46th chapter, as to how the knights of the Round Table were ordained, and how their sieges (seats) were blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It would, of course, be impossible to relate, or even to catalogue, the innumerable adventures to which King Arthur and his knights were subjected. There are over 500 chapters in Sir Thomas Mallory's romance. In leaving this particular romance, however, one's interest is centred on the single chapter which particularly gives its title to the work, and the events related in which

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have been described by the Poet Laureate in that most perfect Idyll of the "Passing of Arthur."

The whole picture of Arthur and the Round Table, from whatever point of view we regard it, is a very interesting one—from the standpoint of art it is exceedingly beautiful and rich in suggestion. Whether or no in the older chronicles there is that element of "sense at war with soul" to which Tennyson refers, there is at least a brilliant spectacle, a gorgeous panorama of fascinating personalities. The dark forests which appear to have been so plentiful form a sombre background to the red and white and purple of the knightly banners and surcoats and the cloth of gold of the ladies' robes. These forests are alternated with still pools and great waters whose margins are haunted at one time by fair enchantresses, at another by such strange creations as the Questing Beast. It is true that we hear little of agriculture or of any useful industry, but we must remember that the stories were put together mainly for the amusement of idle courtiers, and that it is a mistake to look upon them too critically as really representing the state of society when they were written, or indeed any kind of society. They are works of art and should be treated and regarded as such.

The second great group of romances which is generally noticed is that which surrounds the name of the great Emperor Charlemagne. He like Arthur was surrounded by a band of knights or peers, and the adventures of these champions are much of the same kind as those of the companions of the Round Table, and end in a great fight—the battle of Roncesvalles, in which Charlemagne

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is not killed, but death overtakes his nephew Roland after vainly blowing his magic horn, the sound of which was heard as far as Gascogny, and with his good sword Durindana in his hand. It was a curious fashion, this naming of swords. We have seen that King Arthur's was Excalilbur, Roland's was Durindana, Sir Launcelot's was called Arondight, and Charlemagne's was named Joyeuse.

Spain and Portugal are represented in the land of romance by several figures of literary interest. There seems to be some dispute as to the exact origin of the romance of "Amadis de Gaula," but it most probably hails from the Peninsula. By some this romance is held to be the finest and most original of all the tales of chivalry, and it is needless to say that it has been imitated in all forms and all languages. It contains a vast number of subsidiary tales attached to the names of various of the characters, and is thus more a collection of stories than a single narrative. I cannot boast of having read more than a small part of the Amadis. It is of immense extent. The part with which I am best acquainted is the 17th book of the French edition of Etienne. The little book is very thick and closely filled, and seventeen of these would, I think, if read continuously, tend to satisfy or even satiate the modern taste in this department of literature. A few of the titles of the chapters may be taken at random to show the style and plan of the work. Thus ch. 50 tells "How the Knight of the Basilic and the Knight of the Bright-Star fought against the two giants, Stilpon the terrible and Camaleon his brother." Again, "How the ships of the

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two fools conducted the two knights with the ladies and the giant to the Empire of Persia, and what happened to them after they mounted their horses," and so on, and so on. Associated with the "Amadis" and forming the 7th and 8th books of the work is the romance of "Lisuarte de Grecia," the scene of which is mainly in the East—Constantinople and Trebizond. This same peculiarity is seen in the other associated romance of "Palmerin de Oliva." This personage took his name from the fact that after his birth he was exposed on a hill among olive trees, and there found by a shepherd who took him to his home—a very common device among old romancers in laying a foundation for future complications in their narratives.

But I have said enough about the romances of chivalry—they had their day, but a day was to come when they melted away and crumbled to pieces under the combined forces of a genial humour which sapped their foundations, and an artillery of satiric wit which destroyed their superstructure. Before that event came, however, they passed through another and a very important phase of literary history. The great minds of Italy, glowing with a newborn enthusiasm for art and letters, instead of turning aside from these ancient stories as unworthy of learned interest, on the contrary adopted them, sought them out, and above all endeavoured and succeeded in their endeavour to clothe them anew in a richer and more artistic dress, to give them new life; or perhaps it was rather that they found in them a scaffolding ready made, so to speak, on which to rear their beautiful and delicate works of imagination. In

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the hands of Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso the old uncouth legends were formed anew into an exquisite mosaic of poetic fancy, nobly proportioned as the Dome of St Peter's, delicately fashioned as Giotto's Campanile. Instead of being read or sung amid the rough merriment of a feudal banqueting hall they were now recited in the marble galleries of scholars and merchant princes and applauded in the cabinets of cardinals. Luigi Pulci was born of noble parents in Florence in 1431. Matteo Boiardo, who was a Count, was born at Scandiano in 1434. Those two were therefore contemporaries, and it is not certain which poem was first composed. Their two poems of the "Morgante Maggiore" and "Orlando Innamorato" both deal with the circle of romances surrounding the name of Charlemagne. Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" appeared somewhat later, and later still came Tasso's "Gierusalemme Liberata," which, however, is more a historical romance than the others. Spenser's "Fairy Queen" should also be noticed here.

It was at a later date, however, and in Spain, that the romance of chivalry received its death-blow. There and then, occurred an event in literary history which had almost the effect of an earthquake in the physical world. Cervantes wrote and published his "Don Quixote de la Mancha." As is well known, this wonderful book has for its theme the marvellous adventures of a Spanish gentleman, who, poor man, had read such a number of these romances, that his head was completely turned. The form which his lunacy took was to ride forth, accompanied by his squire—the stolid, shrewd, yet infinitely amusing Sancho

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Panza. The head of Don Quixote was full, even to cracking, with the whole literature of romance, and nothing is more surprising than the wide and accurate knowledge of those romances which his immortal creator seems to have possessed. The Don imagined that he himself was a knight errant, or Paladin, that all the common-place objects around him were enchanted castles, dragons, or false knights, and distressed damsels. He tilted at windmills, taking them for giants, and mistook a barber's basin for the helmet of Mambrino.

"Then they discovered thirty or forty windmills which were in that field, and as soon as Don Quixote saw them he said to his squire, 'Fortune is guiding our affairs better than we had desired, for look there, friend Sancho Panza, there appear thirty, or a few more, huge and disorderly giants, with whom I must do battle, and take their lives, and with whose spoils we shall enrich ourselves, for it is a noble task and a great service to clear such a race off the face of the earth.' 'What giants?' said Sancho Panza. 'Those which you see there,' replied his master, 'with the long arms which some of them are wont to have, as long as two leagues.' 'I cry your mercy,' replied Sancho, 'but these are not giants, they are windmills, and these things which look like arms on them are the sails, which, turned with the wind, make the millstone to go round.' 'It is easy to see,' replied Don Quixote, 'that you are not versed in the subject of adventures; *they are giants*, and if you are afraid, go to a distance and pray, while I enter with them into a fierce and unequal battle.' Saying this, he gave spur to his horse, Rocinante, without heeding the cries of

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his squire, Sancho, assuring him that without any doubt whatever, they were windmills, and not giants, that he was about to encounter. He was so convinced that they were giants that he did not hear Sancho's cries, nor stopped to look as he came near, but advanced, crying in a loud voice, 'Do not fly, cowards and vile creatures, for he is a solitary knight that comes to encounter you.' At this time a little air got up, and the sails began to move, on seeing which, Don Quixote cried out, 'Though you wave more arms than the giant Briareus, you shall pay for it.' In saying this, and commending himself with his whole heart to his lady Dulcinea, beseeching that in such danger she should succour him, well covered with his shield, with his lance in rest, he rushed at Rocinante's full gallop, and attacked the first windmill in front of him, and he having giving it a lance thrust in the sail, the wind sent it round with such force that it broke the lance in splinters, and giving both horse and knight such a blow behind that they were sent rolling in pitiful case on the ground."

Perhaps one of the most amusing chapters, as well as the most interesting to the student of literature, is that in which is related the "diverting and great scrutiny which the priest and the barber held in library of our ingenious hidalgo." The priest ordered all Don Quixote's books to be collected together by the barber, and shown to him one by one, so that he should say whether they should be kept or thrown into a bonfire. The conversation of these two worthies over each book, as it was taken up, affords the author an opportunity of criticising each work in a most amusing and original

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way. The first was "Amadis de Gaul." The priest was for condemning it, but the barber says he had heard it was a unique work, and the best of its kind, so its life was spared in the meantime. The next was the romance of "Esplandian," son of Amadis. This unfortunate work was at once heaved out of the window into the bonfire below. "Adelante," says the priest. The next, says the barber, is "Amadis de Grecia." "To the flames," cries the priest. And so they go on through a most amusing list. As for "Palmerin de Oliva," which I have mentioned before, he is thrown at once to the flames, but the companion work, "Palmerin de Ingalaterra," is preserved, partly, we are told, because it is a very good book, and partly because it was said to have been written by a discreet King of Portugal.

This was one of the most interesting moments in literary history. The spirit of satire, which was perhaps never altogether wanting among men, had taken an acuter form, it had become an art, and before it the cloud-castles of romance fell one by one. Nor was this spirit entirely confined to the mockery of romantic extravagance. There were social satires, like that of Rabelais—political, like those of Barclay, in his "Argenis" and "Euphormio." It is needless to say that Cervantes had innumerable imitators, but of these we need not speak. The revolt against romance was a keen and general one, while it lasted, but it was not a permanent revolt. It could not be, for romance is embedded in human nature, and nothing is a surer test of the intellectual permanence of a particular sentiment or literary form than that it can, and does, survive ridicule.

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Romance survived; it is living and breathing strongly in our own day, but for a time, and in one particular shape, it disappeared from literature. One of the most singular of the developments which came to take its place was the series of novels, written in what is called the *gusto picaresco*—a taste which found its gratification in the relating of the deeds, and misdeeds, the tricks, shifts, and adventures, of rogues, and tramps, and adventurers. It is needless to say that such tales are not wanting in picturesque situations, but we have some hesitation in allowing them to be placed within the pale of romance.

It will, doubtless, have occurred to you, that in my very brief and imperfect survey, I have omitted two departments in which romance may be enjoyed, and from which it, undoubtedly, spread and influenced European literature to a considerable extent, and in specific ways. The first of these departments is the large group of Italian novelists, which, beginning with Sacchetti, in the 14th, lasted well into the 17th century. These novelists took their subject matter mainly from current events, or partly from the Fabliaux of northern France. Early French literature was divided into the literature of the Troubadours in the south, and that of the Trouvères in the north. Neither of these literatures was, strictly speaking, a literature of romance, for the Troubadours were mainly taken up with song-writing—much of it very beautiful, and with short ballads or addresses to fair ladies. The Trouvères, on the other hand, occupied themselves with stories—fictitious, no doubt, for the most part, but not framed in any abiding

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or consistently romantic form. They were principally domestic annals and anecdotes of the kind which our own Chaucer relates. It was from these, no doubt, that the Italians got a great deal of their inspiration. But glowing and tragic, cruel and yet brilliant, pathetic yet profligate, as these Italian stories were, they were more anecdotal than poetic; they were more in the nature of facetiae and "penny dreadfuls" than of true romance. So, by your leave, I shall say no more of them.

But there is another department which, with greater force, you might censure me for having omitted—I mean the Teutonic and Scandinavian cycles of romance. Now there is perhaps no class of writings and of imaginings which have had a greater influence on literature than the tales of the ancient northern peoples. But as far as a great part of Teutonic romance is concerned, I think we require to draw another line circumscribing the limits of our study. That line can be best explained by the proposition that "a fairy tale is a different thing from a romance." You will have observed that in almost all those tales of which we have been speaking, supernatural beings have here and there appeared, but the main characters were not supernatural —they were generally very human indeed. So, a story which has for its scene fairyland and for its people elves and gnomes and sylphs and salamanders is not a romance in the sense in which I have been treating that word. For the northern romance, which is not folk-lore or tales of fairyland, we look principally to that literature which is peculiarly dear to the natives of

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these northern isles, for in it they can claim a filial interest. Much of the spirit of it no doubt flows in Norman blood, but the pure strain of Scandinavian romance is of great and priceless interest.

But to return to the point at which the romance of chivalry came to an end and the romance of common life or of roguedom took its place. While the one stream took its course, so to speak, through Lesage and Scarron to our own Fielding and Smollett, there was a back-current, thin and strained—a back-current, of romance which lingered principally in France until the revolution turned everything there topsy-turvey. I don't know whether any of you ever attempted to read a work called "L'Astreé," written by a French nobleman named D'Urfey, of the 17th century. I once did, and although I did not perish in the attempt, it was because I stopped in time. It consists of seven parts, and is contained in I forget how many large volumes. It is all about shepherds and shepherdesses—their loves, their friendships, their intrigues, and above all, their sentiments. They are, of course, not realistic shepherds or genuine shepherdesses; they are the kind of beings who came at that period to represent in pastoral fiction the ordinary men and women of society, but who are sadly burdened by an atmosphere of polite nonentity peculiar to their kind. This subject of what I have called pastoral fiction is as old as the golden age, and had I time, I should have dealt with it as one of the genuine realms of romance—from Theocritus to Pope, from Virgil to our own day there is perhaps as much beauty, as much romance, as much of that haunting

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charm which is the reward of genius in this kind of poetry as in any other under the sun. But the 18th century was not a very poetic or a very romantic period —that is among those who write books. It got flatter and flatter towards the close, men's minds as it were got colder and colder, until there came the great outburst of poetic genuis which formed the cradle of our own age.

In the great days of Elizabeth, we have seen that Edmund Spenser sang of the "Faerie Queen" in the style of the great romantic poets of Italy. In the same age the mighty genius of Shakespeare rose like the sun at noonday, and if we take romance as one of the subdivisions of his enormous intellectual grasp and power, there is of course none greater. There is romance of the most perfect kind in such plays as "The Tempest," "The Winter's Tale," "The Midsummer Night's Dream," and it is woven in the warp and woof of such tragedies as "Hamlet" and "Macbeth." In Milton, too, despite his staid Puritanism, there was a strong element of romance. It is interesting to remember that he at one time had formed the intention of making the legends of King Arthur the subject of his great epic. That, however, was reserved for a later, but, shall we say, a not less glorious hand. In his "Lycidas," Milton entered into that realm of pastoral pathos and romance to which he served himself as heir to the great Sicilian. Then, to leave aside lesser names, there came a long blank and interregnum. Poetry there was no doubt, much of it beautiful enough, but the realm of living, throbbing, beautiful imagination was left almost

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untenanted. The street took the place of the forest, the trim margins of the ornamental water took the place of the lonely pools and the moonlit seas, and the boudoir represented the cave of the enchantress. Conventionality put her soft pedal on the strings of the instruments.

It was at the end of the last century that the poetry of real feeling and emotion, and the prose of real romance came again into being. It was Burns, and Byron, and Wordsworth, and Keats, and Scott that discovered the new-old countries that lay beyond the level seas of platitude. There was a strain of true romantic feeling in Wordsworth, but the form of its expression was more that of contemplation of the beauty of the natural world in combination with human feeling than a presentation of that unconscious delight (arising from the same elements) which bursts forth in romance. Of Burns and Byron we need only say that we know their passionate strength, and, though it even went to excess in some ways, it was an undoubtedly awakening influence on the old order of things. Of Keats, I think the truest criticism is to say that, had he lived, he would have been the greatest poet of modern times. He was only 25 when he died. In his treatment of Greek story he added that romantic element which I have before referred to as wanting in the ancient writers themselves. Coleridge, too, with his "Christabel" and "Ancient Mariner," must ever be regarded as one of the fathers of modern romance. Then there came the great and good Sir Walter Scott, the prince of romancers, the arch-magician of the high and mysterious craft. From the moment when the Waverley Novels began to follow each

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other from the busy press into the eager hands of thousands, the romance that had satisfied the world hitherto seemed shifted back, as it were, into comparative obscurity. A new Epoch had dawned, and, by the genius of one man, the minds of men were enriched and suffused by a new element of intellectual delight. Conventionalities of literary form were forgotten—stiff and artificial ghosts ceased to terrify, or even to amuse; the shepherds and the shepherdesses were, so to speak, found out, and had to pack up their garlands and crooks, and run home. It may be that some of the mediæval figures that again came on the scene were not, perhaps, free from a certain amount of artificiality, but to the hereditary memory of the human race, if there be such a thing, they came as old friends, and all the splendours of old adventure, all the glorious charm of a life that is just a little more interesting than our own, and much more delightful (at least to read about) came back, and refilled the land of romance with the sounds of speech and song, the carolling of birds and minstrels, the tramp of horses, the splintering of lances, the wild wash of northern waters, the glare of border beacons, and all suffused with that rich and tender humour that filled to overflowing the brave heart of Sir Walter. And that it was a brave heart that beat in the great romancer of modern times, no words can tell more pathetically or more truly than his own which are written in his last journals, now, at length, given to our eyes. No more touching book than that has ever been printed.

I have left myself no time to go beyond Sir Walter Scott. Nor is it necessary that I should speak of later

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times further than to remark how the taste for *romantic* fiction has revived in our own time. The great twin brethren of fiction who filled the central space of the century—I mean Dickens and Thackeray—by the power of their description and analysis, by the point and splendour of their humour and satire, made us all in love with the novels of every day life; and romantic though these were in one sense, the more imaginative fields of fiction were deserted. Again the pendulum of public taste appears to have swung back into the wonderland through which we are led by a Rider Haggard or a Stevenson. It is well that taste changes. It is well that human effort varies. It is well, too, above all, that the race still has force, and simplicity, and freshness enough to cling to its young delights. No one need greatly fear for the future of a man or of a nation that will stop to listen to a good romance.

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TRADE AND COMMERCE IN ANCIENT TIMES

THE subject of trade and commerce in our own day is one of vast importance, as it is a subject that affects vitally the interests of a very large proportion of mankind directly, and all mankind more or less indirectly. Apart from individual gains or losses, which are really immaterial to the grand questions of national prosperity and progress, or of national decadence, the course of commercial activity is, in the main, a very fair criterion of human welfare, and the study of its fluctuations from a sufficiently broad standpoint is one that cannot fail to interest those even who are unfitted for its active prosecution, and uninitiated in the somewhat intricate mysteries of daily toil in the markets of the world. I certainly should not think myself justified in dealing with any of those great questions which are at present agitating the world of trade and commerce. My object is a different one. It is to bring to the mind's eye some sort of picture of what the beginnings of trade and commerce were, so far as we can ascertain them, and what was the course of their development among those great nations of

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antiquity to whom in this, as in so many other departments of human activity, we owe so much. This subject of commerce in the ancient world has not, so far as I am aware, been treated at any great length, nor has it won for itself any great prominence, at least in our literature. There is one very valuable work on the subject to which I may often refer—Mr. Lindsay's "History of Merchant Shipping and Ancient Commerce"—which treats of my subject in a very full and, at the same time, most interesting and engaging manner; and although that author's object of study is mainly that of maritime commercial activity, he gives a clear and wide *conspectus* of the whole field of ancient commerce, which reads almost like a romance, and renders his work a leading authority in English literature on the whole subject. Much light is thrown on it also by such works as M. Laurent's "Etudes sur l'Histoire de l'Humanité," M. Pardessus' "Cours de droit Commercial," and his great collection of maritime codes; not to speak of the works of German scholars such as Heeren's "Africa." It is, however, when we endeavour to make some researches in the field of general literature that the chief interest of the enquiry arises, for we then find that the Holy Scriptures themselves, the great poems of Homer, the whole literature of Greece and of Rome, are full of casual references to a department of human action which, having no voice of its own, and lacking the terrible public fascinations of war and conquest, might otherwise be lost to us altogether. The silent victories of peace are not proclaimed aloud by poet and historian, but their fruits are so interwoven with daily life, their

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results so sensible and tangible on every hand, that they tell their own story on the chroniclers' unconscious page, and are heard as undertones even in the songs of the epic muse.

The phrase "ancient times" is a very vague one. The difficulty of estimating lapses of time increases as the periods lie further from our own day, and we are too apt to look upon events separated from each other by periods equal to our whole national history, as if they were contemporaneous. It is impossible to shake ourselves free from this intellectual error; it is sufficient to mention it, in order that you may at least make the effort to appreciate the vast periods of which I must now speak.

It is generally supposed that, in ages of giddy remoteness from our present life, the grassy steppes which lie to the west of northern India were peopled by races whose destiny could not have been foretold from their then condition of pastoral nomadism. A grand people in every sense these were, leading out to their illimitable pastures the flocks they had intellect to tame and domesticate, clothed in garments woven by their own skill, fashioning implements of iron, cooking their food before eating it, and, latterly, stirred through all their spreading families by the instinct that led them to broaden over the young world that was waiting in the glooms of barbarism for the brightening influence of their presence. When the vague wish to wander had become a fixed purpose, the central home was broken up, and two human streams began to flow eastward and westward respectively. That to the east, while sending

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a subsidiary branch into Persia, entered India somewhere about the Kaibar Pass, and slowly moved into the Punjaub and down to the Ganges and Jumna and along the southern slopes of the Himalayas. Here were composed the hymns of the Rig-Veda, and in them we have evidence of how greatly the social life of man had developed itself. Although the intervals of time are dimly distinguished and difficult to apprehend, there is no doubt that the singers of the Vedic hymns lived in the midst of a society which was very different from the state of things on the grass-plains of the north, from which they had wandered so far.

We must now turn to the multitudes which moved in successive waves to the westward. Of these it may be premised that though their divisions were many, and their movements at first very vague, we are quite justified in speaking of them as our remote progenitors. For the goal of their wanderings was Europe, and that goal they in due time reached.

Unfortunately for any pretensions which this great family of the human race may put forth to superior antiquity, or rather to earlier respectability, there can be little doubt that they were not the first to become in any appreciable degree civilized. For in their path from central Asia to Europe, there lay two river valleys in whose rich levels men had probably already built cities and palaces, had already become great in war, and conspicuous in the arts of peace.

If we suppose Babylon to have been founded on the Euphrates somewhere about 2500 B.C., the result doubtless of civilization and empire, as well as the

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beginning of a further degree of both, we cannot doubt that its inhabitants exercised an influence on the races which surrounded them, or were passing by their gates. The great valley of the Nile, too, though less directly in their track, undoubtedly contained a civilization, a society, and an amount of science which would have entitled its inhabitants to look with conscious superiority on the barbarians who were streaming along the shores and islands to the northward. From the shadow of the "sign and wonder," which already fell clearly outlined on the sands of Geezeh, the early Egyptians might well have looked upon all the world beyond as barbarians in a lordlier sense than the petulant Athenians of a later age.

From the Himalayas to the Euxine, the history of the pastoral Aryans is an unwritten volume. Suffice it that the Pelasgians, whom the Greeks looked upon as the stratum of humanity original in their country, proclaim themselves through their speech to be Aryans or Indo-Europeans. Modern science has brought before us evidence that the languages of Greece and Rome, with many others besides, have been carried on native lips through all these dim centuries and over all these weary leagues from continent to continent.

In speaking of Greeks and Romans, we must not ignore the probable earlier wave of Aryan immigration, whose remains are now scattered in the Celtic peoples of the remoter corners of western Europe. I must also remind you that following the Pelasgians there arrived in Europe a third detachment of the great eastern family, namely, the Teutons. With the Slavonians, the influx may be said to have ceased.

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I have dwelt thus long on early history in its general aspect with the view of laying down, as it were, a back ground on which we may now proceed to sketch the special object of our study. We have the Indo-European or Aryan races already in Europe, and slowly forming themselves into those nationalities, which were to emerge later as Greeks, Romans, Teutons, etc., etc., while, on the other hand, to the east and south of the Mediterranean we have the more ancient civilization of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Jews.

Let us look at the Egyptians. Dim indeed, if not utterly lost in the mists of time, are to us, now, the beginnings of Egyptian civilization. Only one race, the Chaldeans, can be supposed to have had an earlier culture, and that culture, full of strange philosophy, of wonder-working and mysterious craft, was transmitted to the Egyptians themselves. But let us look at what the early trade and commerce of Egypt must have been. In doing so, two things at once strike us. First, that Egypt with its rich alluvium, its level breadths of sunny soil, through which flowed its mighty and mysterious river, was a place in which vast crops of cereals might be expected to flourish. And so it was. Egypt was the granary of the ancient world. Another peculiarity of Egyptian civilization, which always suggests itself when we think of the pyramids and rock-cut temples of the Nile, was that of the embalment of the dead. In no other nation of antiquity was this custom brought to such perfection. The exports of Egypt therefore were wheat and barley, the imports, besides different kinds of wood, which was always a deficiency, a very large

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quantity of those rarer balms and spices which were not found in the country itself, but were constantly required for the secret process of embalment.

We find this to be the case in the first instance of recorded trade which meets us in the book of Genesis. Every child knows the story of Joseph and his brethren. When his father sent him forth to seek his brethren, Joseph left the vale of Hebron and proceeded north to Shechem. Being told there that his brethren were further north tending their flocks in Dothan, he went thither, and found them. I cannot do better than quote the simple and beautiful words in which the story is told:—"And it came to pass, when Joseph came unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colours that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes, and, behold, a travelling company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt." Again at v. 28, we have the words, "And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen." The terms Midianites and Ishmaelites probably both refer to Arab tribes, who were the merchant-traders of their times. They were, as we see, mounted on camels, and their route apparently was a recognised one from Gilead or further east down through the desert to Egypt.[1] The spices which they bore were doubtless for the uses which I have indicated among

1 In the 12th chapter of the Koran, the same story is told, and in the great poem of the Persian poet Jami—"Yusuf and Zuleykha"—the route from Midian to Egypt is mentioned.

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the Egyptians. There seems to be some doubt as to the actual goods which they did carry. In the margin of the revised version *gum tragacanth* or *storax* is given as an equivalent for spicery, *mastic* as an equivalent for balm, and *ladanum* for myrrh. Now, although *storax* is the fragrant product of a tree which grows both around the Mediterranean and in Asia, *gum tragacanth* is the product of a shrub whose habitat is northern Persia. *Mastic* is brought from the south of Europe and Morocco. *Ladanum* or *cistus* is also got in the south of Europe. Myrrh, which was very much used in embalming, is a native product of Arabia. We thus see that in all probability, though those merchants came immediately from the direction of Gilead, their merchandise had come from much more distant lands. This shows, what there is little doubt of, viz., that very extensive caravan routes had been formed in very early times, having their origin in the far East, in Arabia, and Asia Minor, and having for one at least of their destinations, the rich market places of Egypt. The route from northern Persia would probably be by Chaldea and Palmyra. The import of wood into Egypt consisted principally of cedar and ebony. Cedar was brought from Lebanon, and ebony probably from the more southerly parts of Africa. We may take it, then, that the first line of commercial traffic which we can lay down with certainty was that between Palestine and the east with Egypt. It is needless to speak of the wealth of corn which Egypt produced, or how in the years of famine that followed, it was dealt out under the wise management

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of Joseph, not only to the Egyptians but to people of other countries. "And all countries," says the Bible, "came into Egypt unto Joseph to buy corn, for the famine was sore in all the earth." Among others who came were Joseph's brethren,—but I need not dwell longer on such a familiar theme.

I may here remark that at no time during their history, were the Egyptians conspicuous in maritime commerce or merchant shipping. This was probably because they had not sufficient wood for ship-building purposes. The Egyptian sailors of the canals made by Sesostris, were more bargemen than mariners. The shipping of Egypt was mainly carried on by the Phœnicians, a race of whom I shall have to speak later on.

Turning now to a later period, and a neighbouring country, the first great mercantile undertakings which we read of among the Hebrews, occur in the times of David and Solomon.

Mr. Lindsay, in the work I have mentioned,[1] says, "David would seem to have been the first in connection with caravans from Petra and from the west, to open up, by means of a line of ships, that trade with 'Ophir' which his son Solomon afterwards made so famous. Where and what 'Ophir' was, has been the subject of innumerable essays by men of learning. . . . Let it suffice that the first notice in the Bible clearly means by 'Ophir' some place in Arabia, where great wealth was found, and was no doubt applicable afterwards to all other similar places. Those writers who, relying on

[1] Hist. of Mrch. Shipping I. p. 27.

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the native Indian names of some of the products said to have come from thence, assert 'Ophir' to be the name of a people near the mouth of the Indus, advance opinions more ingenious than convincing. If 'Ophir' were an Arabian entrepôt for the trade of India, the occurrence of certain Indian names for certain Indian products would be as natural as the use in English of the Persian word shâl, which we pronounce as they do *shawl*. Then David's 'gold of Ophir' may have been simply descriptive of quality, as we used to speak of 'guinea gold.' Be this as it may, it is certain that to David the Jews owe their first practical knowledge of the result of successful commerce."

The great work of the two reigns of David and Solomon was of course the building of the temple at Jerusalem. This magnificent undertaking we may imagine to have caused quite a stir in the old world of the eastern Mediterranean. We read of David's preparations before his death, in the words of Josephus[1]:—"The king commanded the strangers to be numbered, and they were found to be 180,000. Of these he appointed 80 to be hewers of stone, and the rest of the multitude to carry the stones, and of them he set over the workmen 3,500. He also prepared a great quantity of iron and brass for the work, with many, and those exceedingly large cedar-trees, the Tyrians and Sidonians" (*i.e.* the Phœnicians) "sending them to him, for he had sent to them for a supply of those trees." It is somewhat remarkable that the correspondence or contract between Solomon and

1 Whiston's Josephus Antiq., Bk. vii., c. xiv., 1.

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Hiram King of Tyre should exist in such a perfect shape in Holy Writ as well as in the pages of Josephus. Solomon writes that, as he desires to proceed with the building, he will send some of his subjects with those of Hiram to cut down timber on Lebanon, "for the Sidonians are more skilful than our people in cutting wood." He adds that he will pay what wages may be demanded. Hiram replies, agreeing to this arrangement, "for when by my subjects," he says, "I have cut down many and large trees of cedar and cypress wood, I will send them to sea, and will order my subjects to make floats of them, and to sail to what place soever of thy country thou shalt desire, and leave them there, after which thy subjects may carry them to Jerusalem."[1] Hiram also sent a skilled workman to assist at the building.

The riches inherited by Solomon were almost incalculable; his Kingdom was vast and peaceful. There is little wonder then that the court of the Hebrew king should be one of the most splendid upon earth. The great Temple, with its polished stone, and cedar galleries and golden roofs, its crimson and purple and flowered draperies, the king's palace or "House of the forest of Lebanon," with golden shields hanging from its towers, the busy toil of foreign and native workmen, rendered Jerusalem the wonder, almost the centre of the earth.

One great advance was made. The port of Ezion-Geber at the head of the Persian Gulf was now established as an important place of trade, for there the

1 Whiston's Josephus "Antiquities," viii. 2.

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ships of Solomon and sailors of Phœnicia started on new voyages of trade and discovery into the little known oceans of the east. Doubtless also the Mediterranean was covered by Phœnician ships which bore under their purple sails "amber and tin from the far off Cassiterides and gold and silver from the mines of Spain."

The arrangement in this Phœnician and Hebrew commercial alliance was that the ships were manned by Phœnician sailors, but bore Hebrew supercargoes. According to Mr. Lindsay it was somewhere between November and March that the joint fleets sailed from Ezion-Geber, a time when the winds were favourable for sailing down the Red Sea. "Thence," he supposes, "a portion of the ships shaped their course for the south-east shores of Africa, from the straits of Babel Mandeb to Zanzibar and Sofala; while a second portion coasted to the north till they reached the shores of Beloochistan, Baroach (Barygazta), and even the western coasts of Hindostan."[1] It was not until the monsoons had become known that over-sea voyages to India could be attempted. The fleet arrived home again once every three years. "The merchants of those days had no factors, as consignees of their produce or home manufactures, with orders to have ready a cargo in return. They were therefore obliged to keep their ships as a floating warehouse until the exported cargo had been sold, and the produce of the country they were to take in exchange was ready for shipment."[2]

I need only refer to the visit of the Queen of Sheba,

1 Lindsay "Hist. of Merch. Shipping," p. 30.
2 Lindsay, p. 31.

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which was doubtless situated in southern Arabia, to show that there were other places which shared in the wealth and advancement which so distinguished the Hebrews and Phœnicians.

These Phœnicians, whom I have so often mentioned, deserve much more than a passing notice, for they were above all other nationalities of antiquity, the leaders and guiders of merchant shipping and of commerce. I may be permitted to refer to an account of them which I had at one time occasion to write for another purpose.[1]

As time wore on, the colonies which the Phœnicians had planted, became much more important than the mother cities of the coast. Carthage takes a very prominent place in classical history, and although a little out of our chronological order, I may here refer to the voyages of Hanno and Himilco, two Carthaginian navigators, who apparently did more than any one else towards opening up the geographical knowledge, and consequently the commercial opportunities of the ancient world. Hanno, who appears to have been a man of wealth and position, set out somewhere about 600 B.C. with the intention of exploring the African coast and of founding Phœnician colonies there. He sailed from Gibraltar or the "Pillars of Hercules" with 60 ships and 30,000 souls on board. He seems to have reached as as far Sierra Leone, and his adventures were of a very startling character. It is here that the "gorilla" first makes its appearance in history, for it is likely that the savage creatures by which the expedition

1 Journal of Jurisprudence, 1876, p. 197.

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were attacked were some species of those huge apes, which were re-discovered in recent times. He founded several trading stations and returned safely to Carthage.

Even a more interesting voyage was that of Himilco, who, starting about the same time, went north instead of south, and explored the German Ocean, British Islands, and possibly the Baltic. In his course north-westward he was at one time brought to a standstill by an ocean of sea-weed, which we now recognise as the Sargasso Sea, well known to our sailors. He speaks of tin-bearing islands and of the trade between them and Tartessus in former times.

There is indeed no doubt that the ancient Phœnicians traded very largely in tin with those islands, and it is interesting to note that some of the plates in the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenæ are fastened by tin bolts.[1] This brings us back to the first great semi-historical event in Grecian history, the Trojan War. It is interesting to reflect that part of the splendour and magnificence of the step-father of Agamemnon owed its support to British "tin."

I am not going to do more than refer to the fall of Troy. I need only point out what vast advances, from a merely primitive civilization, had by that time been made. The number and size of the Grecian fleet, the armour, the decorations, and splendid furniture, which not only the Greeks, but the Trojans themselves were possessed of. Within late years, these have been brought before our gaze in rich abundance by the labours of Dr. Schliemann, and they display a very

1 Lindsay, vol. I., p. 10.

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advanced state of social luxury which could only have arisen from wide commercial relations.

In Homer's "Odyssey," Book V., we have a very minute account of the building of a ship by Ulysses, assisted by the nymph Calypso :—

"She gave him a large axe, fitted to his hands, of steel, sharpened on both sides, and with it a very beautiful handle of olive wood well fitted to it; then she gave him a well-polished adze, and she led the way to the extreme part of the island, where tall trees sprang up, alder and poplar, and there was pine reaching to heaven, long since seasoned, very dry, which would sail lightly for him. . . He began to cut the wood. . . and he felled 20 in all, and cut them with the steel, and polished them skilfully, and directed them by a rule. In the meantime Calypso brought augurs, and he then perforated all and fitted them to one another; and he fixed it with pegs and cramps. Ulysses made the wide raft as large as any well-skilled workman would make the bottom of a wide ship of burden. And he made it erecting the ribs and fixing them with many beams, and finished it with long decks. He made a mast in it, and a sail yard fitted to it, and he made a rudder besides that he might guide it, and he dammed it all round with willow wicker work to be a defence against the waves, and he heaped much ballast upon it. In the meantime Calypso (who seems to have acted as a sort of fairy god-mother) brought linen for making sails, and Ulysses contrived these also well, and bound in it upper ropes, cables and sheets. And then he drew it into the sea with levers."[1]

Such we may take as a fair enough account of a roughly constructed ship or raft of the period, the same period, practically, as that which saw the stately vessels described by Ezekiel sailing to and from the harbours of Phœnicia. "They have made all thy planks of fir trees from Senir; they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make a mast for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars: they have made thy benches of ivory, inlaid in boxwood from the isles of Kittim.

1 "Odyssey," Book V., Buckley's translation, p. 72.

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Of fine linen, with broidered work from Egypt was thy sail, that it might be to thee for an ensign; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was thine awning."[1]

The whole chapter of Ezekiel from which this passage is taken is extremely interesting from our present point of view, for it gives a long list not only of the peoples and countries which traded with Phœnicia, but also of the articles which formed the subject of that trade.

From Tarshish, we are told, came silver, iron, tin, and lead. Now, if adopting the most likely view, we take Tarshish to mean Tartessus in Spain, it is evident that this passage refers to the mineral wealth for which Spain has always been famous, and doubtless include the products of the British mines, which could be reached round the north-west coast of Spain. Then we have Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, interpreted by Mr. Lindsay to mean the Ionian Greeks and the nations south of the Black Sea. From them were imported men and vessels of brass. The slave trade here referred to undoubtedly existed from the earliest times, and is illustrated by the story of Joseph. From Armenia came horses, war-horses, and mules; from Dedan and many islands, horns of ivory and ebony. From Syria came emeralds, purple and bordered work, fine linen, coral, and rubies. With regard to the purple, I may say that that colour was one much sought after in antiquity, and which was produced at various stations on the Mediterranean from a small shell-fish known as the *Murex trunculus*. We are told that "in the time of Cicero, wool double-dyed with this colour was called *dibapha*, and was so ex-

1 Ezekiel xxvii., 6.

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cessively dear that a single pound-weight cost a thousand denarii, or about £35 sterling."[1] From Judah and Israel came "wheat of Minnith," pannag (what "pannag" was appears to be a difficulty with the translators, as in the Revised Version it is noted in the margin as "perhaps a kind of confection"), honey, oil, and balm. From Damascus came wine of Helbon and white wool. From Arabia and Kedar came lambs, rams, and goats. From Sheba and Raanach, the chief of all spices, precious stones and gold. From a number of places, named together, which Mr. Lindsay takes to mean the river valley of Babylon and Nineveh came choice wares, wrappings of blue and broidered work, and cedar chests of rich apparel.

Let us now try to trace the main roots or feeders, so to speak, of the trade that resulted in so much wealth around the Mediterranean shores.

These feeders consisted of caravan routes which lay like a network across the desert in almost every direction. Camels and dromedaries were of course the means of transport and the nomadic tribes formed in the main the crews of these "ships of the desert." For reasons of mutual protection against the very grave perils which surrounded such expeditions, they were organized on a very large scale—thousands of camels taking part in one caravan—and all were arrayed in careful order and under strict discipline. We who look with admiration on those great merchant ships that bear home from tropic seas their precious burdens, through all perils of storm and sea, can well imagine an even greater halo of

1 Chambers's Encycl.

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weird interest attending the arrival of such a mighty troupe, the long line of patient camels growing on the horizon of sand that trembled in the Syrian sun, the bales of priceless jewels and spices, the camels' necks hung with chains of gold, the weary merchants in rich apparel, the dusky guides, and all the way-worn paraphernalia of the long looked for caravan, the meeting of friends long sundered, the joys of well earned rest, and the sad tale that would be seldom wanting of some friend and companion stricken by the sun, or pierced by the marauding spears that ever and again rose round the peaceful march in circles that threatened destruction and death.

I have already mentioned the route from Palestine to Egypt. Another lay from Phœnicia to Mesopotamia. A third lay along the east coast of the Red Sea. A fourth was from Petra, through Arabia to Gerrha. A fifth led northwards to Asia Minor. A sixth led to the south through Egypt and Africa. Many branch-lines, as we would call them, existed, and it was natural that at great junctions such as Petra, Gerrha, and Palmyra, cities should arise of considerable wealth and importance.

Let us now turn from this comparatively early state of things, to what we all recognize as the classical nations of antiquity, the Greeks and Romans.

I have not said much of the Greeks as yet, beyond referring to the siege of Troy and the poems of Homer. In these poems it is peculiar to notice that whenever trade or the results of commerce are spoken of, it is in connection with the Phœnicians. This would seem to

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indicate that Greek commerce was a thing of later growth, and so, doubtless, it was.

If we look at the early laws of the Athenians, however, we can perceive that there was a considerable world of commercial activity which required regulation. One very salutary law of general application is found in one of the orations of Demosthenes. "There shall be no cheating among the market folks. Certain merchants were liable to imprisonment if they overrated their goods or took less than they asked at first. There was also a law against fish which had passed its best being laid in water to restore, apparently, at least, its freshness."[1]

It is somewhat strange that these last two fragments of law came down to us, not in the works of jurists, but in those of comic dramatists. But the stage in Athens was always more or less given up to political burlesque —as though our theatres of to-day were to produce plays made up of such scenes and incidents as Mr Punch lays before us in his cartoons.

We also find that figs and all other fruits, except olives, were forbidden to be exported from Athens, and if any Athenian factor or merchant should convey corn anywhere else than to Athens, an action lay against him, and the informer might claim half the corn. No Athenian was to buy more corn than 50 phormi. No one might export wood or pitch. Two other enactments seem rather hard—"No man shall sell perfumes" and "No man shall have two trades."[2]

1 See Potter's "Grecian Antiquities," 170-1.
2 Do. 171-2.

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I have already endeavoured to show you how rich a trade that was which passed along the Mediterranean shores and along the caravan routes ending on these shores. In all this Greece took a considerable part, but a secondary one to that of the Phœnicians and their colonies. Let us see what she could herself contribute to the general store.

First, as regards minerals. She had gold mines at Laurium in Attica, salt and iron were produced in a small measure, but the great resources of Greek soil were the matchless marbles that lay in mountain ranges from sea to sea. And it was on these stores of Parian and Pentelic stone that the Greek genius spent itself at its highest, moulding the great white blocks into images of unfading loveliness which no modern art can surpass or even equal, piling up their snowy temples glittering with pillared porticos, and crowned with metope and triglyph of exquisite beauty, and with friezes that were "rough with stories of the gods."

Cereals, such as wheat and barley, formed a greater portion of the exports of Greece, along with flax, wine, and oil.

The two great centres of Greek commerce were Corinth and Athens. I mention the former first as it was the chief mercantile port, Athens with its magnificent triple harbour of the Piræus, Murychia and Phalerum, being more a naval station or place from which the great fleets we read of sailed.

An epigram in the Anthology bewails the fallen glories of Corinth. It was written in the time of Justinian about A.D. 550.

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"Where is now thy wondrous beauty, oh Dorian Corinth—where thy walls, and thy towers, and thy ancient treasures? Where are the temples of thy gods, thy palaces, thy mothers, the daughters of Sisiphus, and thy inhabitants who were to be counted by myriads?"

Corinth was so situated that it could scarcely fail to become a great commercial city. The isthmus, on which it stands, is so narrow that in ancient times it possessed a harbour on each side, one called Lechœum on the Adriatic side, and the other called Cenchreæ to the eastward. Although it has been remarked that "among the illustrious writers of Greece not a single Corinthian appears," it was a city in which art was highly cultivated. It was a place of great wealth and splendour. Perhaps its ultimate fate is a warning against an exclusive pursuit of commerce and even of decorative art without the humanizing influences of literary culture, for Corinth soon became so vicious, and life there so debased, that it became a byword even among those whose code of morals was distinctly lower than our own. In such lurid fashion set the "star of Greece."

Of the great naval armaments of Athens during the Persian Wars it is not necessary to speak, as in such times there was little room for the peaceful prosecution of trade, though there is no doubt that, as far as shipping and navigation is concerned, the ancient world was slowly but surely making large advances.

Passing to the Macedonian period of Greek history, we find in the eastern expedition of Alexander the Great perhaps the most important event as regards the future of eastern commerce that had as yet occurred.

It is impossible to tell when the first commercial

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intercourse with India took place. I have already indicated that there is evidence to show that the products of the far East were brought to the shores of the Mediterranean by means of those great caravan routes which stretched away into the central parts of Asia, but when we get as far as the Bactrians the lines seem to lose themselves in the sands and steppes—we can assert nothing positive as to their remoter sources. A legend exists among the ancient histories—it is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Arrian—of an early expedition by Sesostris from Egypt to India with an immense fleet. The story, however, is probably mythical.

Alexander, in the year 334 B.C., crossed the Hellespont with 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. He subdued the greater part of Asia Minor, he defeated Darius, conquered Syria, Phœnicia, and Cyprus, marched into Egypt and founded Alexandria. He then passed eastward through Jerusalem, and conquered Babylonia, Persia, Media and Hyrcania, and at length reached the north-west of India, penetrated across the Indus and Hydaspes into what is now the Punjab. He then turned, sailed down the Indus and returned by land to Babylon where he died of fever.

It is right here to notice that Darius, an earlier monarch than he whom Alexander defeated, had already navigated the Indus and no doubt entered into important commercial relations with the great towns of Hindostan, for he levied from this part of his dominions about one-third of the whole revenue of Persia. Alexander's progress was not that of a devastating conqueror,

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it was rather like a ray of light piercing far into the darkness, and calling into life and activity peoples and cities, trade routes, and emporia which had hitherto been veiled from the Mediterranean nations. Mr. Lindsay thus describes the effects of this epoch-making expedition.

"Articles of commerce, of which the Western World had had no previous experience, were thus brought to light. Rice, produced from irrigated fields; a cotton tree of a superior growth, which, from its fine tissues, furnished the materials for the manufacture of paper; various descriptions of spices and opium; wine made from rice and from the juice of palms; wool from the great bombax tree; shawls made from the fine hair of the Thibetan goats; silken tissues of various kinds; oil from the white sesamum; and perfumes of the richest description."[1]

I have previously referred to the trade by sea with the east. There can be little doubt that Ceylon was known to the Phœnicians.

Before leaving the Greeks and their commerce I may here quote a passage from the comedy of the "Basket-Bearers," written by Hermippus, a dramatist of the time of Pericles. Only a few fragments of his writings remain. In one of these occurs a passage which reads like the post-prandial musings of a satisfied Athenian. We may imagine him leaning back on his couch as he says—"Tell me, oh muses, inhabiting the Olympian seats, whence does Bucchus sail over the wine-coloured sea, and how many good things may a man bring home in

1 Lindsay, vol. I., p. 136.

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his black ship. Cabbages and skins of oxhide from Cyrene, mackerel and cured fish from the Hellespont, meal and ribs of beef from Italy, . . pigs and cheese from Syracuse, rich hangings and papyrus from Egypt, frankincense from Syria, cypress trees from beautiful Crete, loads of ivory from Libya, dried grapes and figs from Rhodes, pears and large apples from Eubœa, nuts and almonds from Paphlagonia, fruit and wheaten flour from Phœnicia, pillows and carpets from Carthage."[1] Such is the list which he gives, and it shows that, with some money to spend, life might have been made very endurable at Athens.

I have left myself too little space to speak of the Romans, the great twin civilization with the Greeks, which in later years extinguished all its contemporaries and became the dominant empire of the world.

In their earlier years the Romans were not conspicuous in trade. They hated the sea, and they affected to despise commercial pursuits. They were satisfied to allow Greeks and others to conduct their commerce for them. After Carthage had fallen, however, they to some extent woke up.

Rome was supplied with corn by fleets sailing from Sicily and Africa, and that is about all that we know of Roman trade in the earlier period. About the time I have mentioned, however, a college of merchants was established at Rome. No senator, however, was allowed to own a ship in foreign trade. It was thought that his having an interest of this kind might be prejudicial to his service of the state.

1 Poet. Com. Graec. Frag., Didot, p. 141.

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Seafaring men, for some reason that we cannot well get at, were looked down upon in Rome.

Gradually, however, these feelings and restrictions disappeared before the necessities of the broadening empire, and in later times we see the whole known world a market for the supply of the incalculable luxuries of the Roman court and nobles. It would indeed be no great flight of fancy to suppose that the imperial ambition and sense of sovereignty which distinguished the later history of the Roman state was largely fostered and fed by the way in which her poets and orators constantly spoke of the far-reaching grasp of her influence—of the power which placed countless cups of myrrh and Alexandrian crystal on the board of Antoninus, and supplied the supper table of Heliogabulus with the heads of 600 ostriches.

The rich provinces, subject to almost unlimited taxation, enabled the higher classes in Rome to indulge in every freak of extravagance. Both Gibbon and Mr Lindsay, following the accounts given by Pliny, speak of the Customs and Excise duties which were introduced about the time of Augustus. Mr Lindsay says:—"The annual tributes, customs, and direct taxation of the provinces, tended still further to produce the balance of values. The farmers were paid with their own money. The Romans laid not only heavy duties upon the natural product of every country subject to their sway, but also an export duty on produce sent away, as well as an import duty on any article brought in for the consumption of the provinces. A transit duty was even levied on goods and produce of British origin during

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their passage through the Romance province of Gaul. At the other extremity of the empire, on the coasts of the Arabian Gulf, the same system of fixed taxation was enforced; but the high prices we have named as prevailing at Rome for foreign goods of all kinds, especially those of India, Arabia and Babylonia, rendered this taxation comparatively light."[1]

The Roman Empire was now of immense extent. One of the first efforts of Augustus towards the consolidation of that empire was the encouragement of trade and commerce by putting down with a strong hand brigandage by land and piracy by sea. The individual currencies, too, of the various countries and provinces gradually disappeared before the uniform standard of the imperial coinage. As Mr. Capes says, in his "Early Empire,"[2] "Merchant fleets passed peacefully from land to land and exchanged the products of their different climates, while the central government was content to keep the police of the sea and land, allowing tolls and harbour dues to be levied for purposes of local revenue, and watching over the corn trade with especial care, that the markets of the capital might be always stocked. But this trade was hampered with no theories of protection and was not interfered with by commercial or navigation laws.

Various articles began to be known by the name of the province from which they came. Thus a "Noric sword"—"ensis Noricus"—meant originally a sword made from the steel of Noricum, a province correspond-

1 Vol. I., p. 175.
2 p. 199.

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ing to the modern duchy of Styria, but was used figuratively, as we find in Horace, for a sword of fine quality. Thus also a "Coan" robe, meant a fine purple silk vestment, deriving its name from those produced in the island of Cos, now Stancho. Propertius sings of the "transparent folds of a Coan vesture."

The description of a Roman dinner party at this period is sufficient to show to what a height the luxuries of the rich had attained. We have such a description in the pages of a writer of the early Empire, but I need not dwell on the progress of a feast which was very prolonged, and, on the whole, very ridiculous. It has its melancholy side, too, for it shows whither the Roman character and the Roman Empire were drifting. This enormous wealth was being concentrated in the capital while the provinces were being drained of their resources. As Mr. Capes remarks, "The balance of trade was always against Italy, for she failed to supply herself even with food, exported little beside wine and oil, and had few great manufacturing centres. In old days the riches that had been gained by plunder and extortion went out again to seek investment in the provinces; but now that Rome was the queen of fashion and the centre of attraction for the wealthy of all countries, the realised fortunes came hither to be spent." [1]

If time allowed, I should have liked to say something of the interesting questions which arise as to the origin of our maritime law and of the manner in which it has been developed. There is little doubt that in its main principles that law is of Phœnician origin. It was

1 Early Empire, p. 199.

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imported by Phœnicians into Rhodes, from Rhodes into the Roman jurisprudence. It is questionable, however, if we took it direct from thence, for the Phœnician influence permeated all the colonies of Tyre and Carthage, and it was on the north coast of France and at Barcelona that the two great mediæval codes took their rise—the "Rolles of Oleron" and the "Consolato del Mare," from which our own "Black Book of the Admiralty" is directly derived.

One word as to some of the details of ancient trading. I have already said something of the ships of the ancient world, and of the camels of the desert, as the means of transport. To these are to be added the rafts of King Hiram, the barges of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and for the European overland trade, great troupes of asses and mules.

With regard to the currencies in use in ancient times, it is needless to point out that they were of a very varied character. It is very difficult indeed to trace the origin of coined money. It dates from the most ancient times. The lion-weights of Nineveh were probably the earliest on record, but coins of a rude character occur very early. The first system undoubtedly was that of paying by weight. The money was weighed when exchanged. The people of Lydia are known to have coined money as early as 800 years B.C. It is characteristic of the Greek and Ionian genius that their coins should very early have become works of art. And not only are they works of art, but they are monuments of the utmost historic interest, for they generally bear the names of their various countries, and images of their

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tutelary deities; besides, they in many instances present us with undoubtedly genuine portraits of historical personages, whose outward appearance it would be otherwise impossible for us to become acquainted with. Thus almost every ruler of the eastern world—Alexander the Great, and the whole series of Roman emperors—are as well known to us in medallion as are our own George III. or Charles I.

The earliest Roman coins were lumps of copper, each of which bore the name of *aes*, or *stips* (from which comes the word stipendium or stipend). They were weighed, not counted. In the times of the Republic, the copper coinage had extended to six denominations. There was the original *as*, or *aes*, the *semis* or $\frac{1}{2}$, the *triens* or $\frac{1}{3}$, the *quadrans* or $\frac{1}{4}$ of the *as*, the *sextans* or $\frac{1}{2}$ of the *triens*, and the *uncia* or one-twelfth of the *as*. The silver coinage of the same period consisted of pieces of three denominations, the *denarius* or 10 asses, the *quinarius* or 5 asses, and the *sextertius* or $2\frac{1}{2}$ asses.

In Imperial times the old copper coinage was superseded by what are known as the *imperial large brass*, *imperial middle brass*, and *imperial small brass*, while gold does not make its appearance in Roman coinage until the time of Julius Cæsar, when the golden denarius, or *aureus*, as it was called, came into use.

The Roman system of keeping accounts was a very elaborate one, and every man of respectable position made it a point of honour to keep regular and correct accounts of his daily transactions. These transactions were first entered in day-books, called *Adversaria* or *Calendaria*, and from thence transferred to the *Codices*

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Expensi et Accepti, or ledgers. They had also banks and bankers, and paid money by order or cheque upon these.[1] Accounts in a general way were known as *Rationes*.

It may be worth while to remark that at many points in the Mediterranean, lighthouses had been erected. The Pharos, at Alexandria, was, perhaps, the most remarkable of these. In the windows, near the top, fires were kept blazing; and Ptolemy, in a pious inscription, dedicated the structure for the benefit of sailors.

A great deal of discussion has arisen as to how, and when, and where, the mariners' compass was discovered. Without it, it would seem that ancient navigation would be almost entirely reduced to mere *cabotage*, or coasting, save for the knowledge of the stars. There is no evidence, however, that it was known among the ancients of the western world, although there are indications that it may have been known to the Chinese at a very early period.

Of the influences of such a discovery, and the changes thereby wrought in the whole course of commerce, it is needless to speak, but it forms a striking commentary on the progress of humanity.

That progress is one from darkness to light, from the blind instincts and child-like assumptions of the barbarian to the trained action and proved convictions of the civilized and educated thinker. Just as of old, the Greek mariner, above the blue waters of the Cyclades, saw, as he sailed, the dawn break with

1 Ramsay, Rom. Antiqu., 270.

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Lucifer, and evening set with Hesperus, and trimmed his sail to the silent circle of the planets that shone on him from beyond the reach of storms, so does our human advancement spring from a study of the wonderful natural things around us, and as we so study, the wonder deepens more and more, the great dim suggestions which one age scarcely dares to utter, become the common knowledge of the next. So the great discovery of the compass is significant, as, if, in our advancement, commercial or intellectual, we can fix our aim on some end which is both good and true, and which will endure beyond the rise and fall of selfish interests, we need not fear to enter on the voyages that lie before us.

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ON SOME ITALIAN POETS

WHEN the poets of Italy are spoken of, one naturally thinks almost exclusively of the names of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso. This is as it should be, for these undoubtedly were the poets who gave the Italian language its high place among the national literatures of the world, and yet it is scarcely fair to dismiss Italian poetry as sufficiently studied in the works of these men, for behind and around them were clustered group after group of poets, each one of whom, though dimmed by the light of these suns, was no less a sun himself. Perhaps when our intellectual telescopes get new powers, and some of the old dust wiped from their glasses, a rearrangement may take place among those luminaries. At any rate, it is our duty to look fairly, as far as we can, at them all, for there have been such things known in the literary firmament as a magnificent comet ending in smoke, and a small, almost unnoticed, star being hailed as the centre of systems.

It is not my intention to speak at any length of individual names; especially as everything that could well be said about those best known has been said, and

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in a way with which I could not hope to compete; but it may perhaps be interesting to take what must be a very cursory glance at some Italian poets, including those whom we do not hear so much of in general. There is no limit, so far as I can find, to the field of vision. In one particular direction this strikes one with special force, namely, with regard to the imitators of Petrarch. Petrarch himself, it is thought with some truth, wrote too many sonnets, but the sonnets, and books of sonnets, of his imitators, are like novels in our day—innumerable—and by no means of a quality to justify their quantity. When an idea occurred to one of these sonnetteers, he seems to have considered himself a made man, for that idea would supply him with subjects for versification for the rest of his life. It could be looked at this way, that way, and the other way. It could be looked at inches at a time; it could be looked at through concave and convex spectacles; it could be finally turned upside down and the process recommenced. The idea, curiously enough, was in almost every case the same, namely, that he, the poet, was desperately in love with a young lady, to marry whom was quite out of the question, generally because she had been already married to somebody else. Fortunately, however, Petrarch and his imitators do not constitute Italian poetry, so that even if we refuse to follow those poets into the wilderness, there are many pleasant fields, and rich gardens, and sombre woods, in which we may enjoy the deep and peculiar pleasures which true poetry affords.

Even at a very general glance, there are three things

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which strike one as very remarkable about the birth of poetry in Italy. The first is, that in the year 1300, suddenly, and in the person of one man, Italian poetry rose out of the Dark Ages to its utmost height. In that year Dante wrote his "Divine Comedy," and the poetry of Italy contains nothing greater. Secondly, Italian poetry, at its first birth, had all the qualities which are to be found generally at the close, and not at the commencement, of a national literature. I refer here more particularly to Petrarch, whose sweet but stilted style and metaphysical involutions contain less of the first strong roots of native song, than of what seems like the ramifications of ancient philosophy at last breaking into flower. Thirdly, that after this great beginning, there was comparative silence for a century —from the crowning of Petrarch till the times of the Medici.

So that Italian poetry may be figured as a country into which we enter between two great Alps—a sort of Kyber Pass between Dante and Petrarch. Beyond them is a plain—a level—and, it must be confessed, a somewhat arid plain, with here and there an oasis, and it is not till we are thoroughly weary that we begin to see before us the purple hills of Florence, and the voluptuous gardens of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Dante Alighieri was born in Florence in 1265. Like most poets, he fell early in love, and like the love of many poets, his was unfortunate. The beautiful Beatrice de' Portinari died and left for him a lifelong regret, and through him an immortal name. Notwithstanding his deathless passion for the dead, Dante was

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foolish enough to marry a wife—Gemma de' Donati. This Gemma was a lady of temper—of a disagreeable temper. She led the poet a miserable life. Dante's life was an eventful and interesting one—fighting, travelling, in fame and in misfortune, by turns a Guelph and a Ghibelline, exiled, worshipped; through all bearing his passionate poet's heart and his supreme intellect, wedded to that divine faculty by which he makes these felt across the gulf of five centuries. He died at Ravenna in the year 1321, at the age of 57.

It may be worth while to look at the historical events which were taking place in Europe during Dante's lifetime. This mode of looking at the lives of great men has the advantage of sustaining our interest in the general history of mankind, and prevents our ideas of history from becoming mere isolated spots of light, tending in a large degree to deepen the surrounding darkness. When Dante was seven years old, Henry III. of England died, and was succeeded by Edward I. The former king is mentioned by Dante in the Purgatorio—

> "Vedete il Re de la semplice vita,
> Seder la solo Arrigo d'Inghilterra."

King Hakon of Norway is also alluded to in the Paradiso, at a time when the islands of Shetland were under the Norwegian crown. It was during Dante's life that the War of Scottish Independence reached its height. In English literature there was nothing then to boast of but a few chronicles and histories. France had produced her Provencal Troubadours, and Spain her chronicle of the Cid, but neither country

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could as yet boast of a literature in any wide sense of the word. Yet these nations, as well as the Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, and Scandinavian races may be credited with an earlier beginning in poetic literature than the Italians. This beginning, however, though earlier, and, indeed, going back into periods of remoteness which no one can estimate with confidence, was less sudden, less striking, and less intellectual, if I may be allowed the expression, than the birth of Italian poetry in the school of Dante. We have it on Hallam's authority that "no industry has hitherto retrieved so much as a few lines of real Italian till near the end of the 12th century."[1] This must not, however, be taken to mean that there was no popular poetry in Italy. Recent research and criticism has revealed a rich mine of song and lyric poetry in the historic land lying between Sicily on the one hand and Provence on the other.

The "Divine Comedy" of Dante, if not the greatest, is certainly the most interesting poem in European literature. For it bears, in itself, as no other poem does, the utmost result of one great cycle of human thought, commingled with the first beginnings of another and a greater. It is the last fruit dropped from the withering branches of darker ages, bearing to the quickening earth the seeds of the Renaiscence.

Broadly speaking, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the time of Dante, all literature, all art, all culture, had been veiled under a thick impenetrable cloud. The human intellect, which had reached such heights in

1 "Lit. of Mid. Ages," I., 45.

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Greece and Augustan Rome, had gathered over it a film of monkish ignorance, and childish superstition. The literature of Rome was partially, and that of Greece totally, lost. The ruin of Paganism had called into being a form of Christianity, which was as much as possible its antithesis. This earthly life, in which those old poets had found so much to admire, and to love—the pulse of healthy blood through the veins, the beauty of form and colour, the stateliness of human achievement, be it in the marbles of a temple, or in the provinces of a world-wide empire—these, all these, were as dust and ashes to the pious Anchorite, who looked upon his life in this world as something to be mistrusted, and shorn of all admiration, a flowering garden that had perforce to be looked upon as a howling wilderness. It is, therefore, little to be wondered at that the few fragments of ancient culture, which did survive—chief among which were the works of Virgil—were looked upon as an unholy thing, something to be handled only with the utmost caution, something behind which there was ever lurking a Sathan or an Asmodeus, ready to lure the unwary to destruction. Here and there there were scholars who kept alive a kind of ghostly philosophy, or a garbled residuum of Aristotle, but apart from this, there was no culture in Europe at all. Religion had largely become blind superstition, often mingled with fraud. Poetry and the fine arts were well nigh extinct. The only conceptions of the invisible world then prevalent were of a gross and material kind. The human intellect, as it were, had fallen into a period of second childhood.

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It was just at the close, then, of this long period of gloom and error that Dante wrote his great poem, and it is not surprising that he took for his subject the triple theme of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. His materialism, which, if it were not poetical, would be gross, his personalities, the very daring of the scheme itself coming near to an irreverance which an age of wider culture would avoid, all these belong to the age from which he was emerging—to the already stirring forces of the Renaiscence belong the warp of mythology which crosses the woof of his orthodoxy, the art of his descriptive verse, his delight in vast forests and mountains and rivers and lakes, tinctured with terrible gloom or lit with unimaginable brightness; over all, his human passion for the love of his boyhood, the dear, dead Beatrice. There are also to be noted specific verses which tell of the first advances of the tide of new learning which was soon to flow over Europe. It is not my intention to criticise Dante's great poem, but one or two remarks may be permitted. There are faults in the Divine Comedy as there are spots on the sun. It would be considered barely decent in our day for a poet to describe the infernal regions minutely. Even already we are conscious of a feeling of this kind regarding our own Milton, but it would be an unpardonable offence for him to people that region with gentlemen and ladies recently deceased towards whom he bore a grudge. Such a thing might be perpetrated in a coarse burlesque, but nowhere else. Yet Dante has no such compunctions. Even deceased Popes do not escape his mordant pen, terrible in its immortal scorn. Another fault, which is

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more purely a literary one, mars the Purgatorio in particular. This is the extreme abstraction and subtlety of the thought in many passages.

But all such imperfections disappear as we contemplate with wonder the intense and fervid imagination which built for its own delight this magnificent panorama of the unseen—projecting itself as it were into the great voids that then and ever will surround all human thought, and painting them and peopling them with a transfigured scenery and a society no longer haphazard or incomplete, but arranged and classified by the irrevocable doom of justice.

Turning from Dante, our sight is next attracted to the great twin-spirit, who, along with him, threw open the gates of literature and learning, first to Italy, and then to all Europe.

Francesco Petrarca was 17 years old at Dante's death. He was a man passionately attached to literature, an artist in faculty and feeling, pure in a corrupt age, and one of the very first to unite true scholarship with a layman's knowledge of the world. Like Dante, he fell early in love, and made this unfortunate passion the keynote of his poetry. In the gay court of Avignon, in Paris, in the Low Countries, in the forest of Ardennes, at Naples, at Rome, or in the sombre shades of Vaucluse, there was ever present with the wandering poet a haunting image of Laura de Sade, the wife of Hugues de Sade, a French noble, the girl whom, from the first moment that he met her, to the last day of his life, he loved with a passionate intensity, which became immortal in the amorous music of his sonnets, and has

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formed the model in succeeding ages of a poet's passion. To understand Petrarch and his work aright, we must recognise in him three ruling motives. First, his passion for Laura; second, his love of scholarship; and thirdly, it must be added, a somewhat excessive craving for fame. With these three motives to guide his conduct, he became the greatest poet of his age, he collected manuscripts of the Greek and Latin classics with increasing industry, and he marked a notable year in the literary history of the world, by getting himself publicly crowned at Rome, with a laurel wreath, in the year 1341. The scholarly side of Petrarch's life and character belong more to the history of the Revival of Learning than to my present purpose. It is to him, along with his friend, Boccaccio, that the modern world owes its knowledge of the literature of Greece. That is, in itself, sufficient to raise the name of Petrarch to everlasting fame, but he is, perhaps, better known to the general world as the poet of love. Almost everyone has read one or more of that wonderful series of sonnets, over ninety in number, which he laid at the feet of Laura. The Trionfi are less known, and, perhaps, justly so, while the mass of his elegant Latin prose—and it is a vast mass—is only known to the curious and the learned. One word must suffice as to Petrarch's poetry. It is widely different from Dante's. There are no stupendous visions, there are no terrible woes and horrible sufferings of the flesh, there are no dreams of a splendour and light, which is almost too great for words, there is little of the sense of scathing retribution of a blind and awful justice, following, like a sleuth-

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hound, the lapses of human life, or the momentary error of a death-bed—all is calm, and dreamy, and sensuous. The smallest trifles and circumstances of daily life are dwelt on, and infused with the passion of a poet's love. Petrarch might truly have said :—

> " All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of love,
> And feed his sacred flame."

And it is a flame in which there is no dross—reverent, fearful of itself, yet heart-felt in its intensity. In hands less strong than Petrarch's, the motive of some of his sonnets would have fallen below the common-place. Taking the titles of some of the sonnets at random, we find such as these, " He compares himself to a little moth who causes his own death by his desire to approach the flame " ; again, " He rejoices at having stolen his mistress's glove, thus being able to see her hand, and he complains of having to give it back again," and so on. He even condescends to play upon words—that fatal fault from which Shakespeare is not exempt—the consonance of his mistress's name with the laurel tree being an inexhaustible source of delight to him.

Petrarch, although he was the first great master of the sonnet, was not its inventor. And this leads me to speak of three poets, who were, in a general sense, contemporaries of Dante and Petrarch. These three were *Nicolino Ubaldini*, *Guido Cavalcanti*, and *Cino da Pistoia*.

Of Ubaldini, little appears to be known. He is mentioned by Tiraboschi ; and Rubbi says of him, that

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he was a citizen of Faenza, and lived in Tuscany. He flourished about the year 1250. Dante mentions his name in the XIV. canto of the Purgatorio, but without any comment as to his poetical qualities. The only specimen of his work I have been able to find is a Canzone, attributed either to him or to Sacchetti. It is a little poem, telling how the poet came upon a bevy of girls, gathering roses, and lilies, and violets, in a wood. Unheeding the thunderstorm that was gathering, they pushed through the underwood to discover where the nightingale sat who was singing so sweetly. A serpent came out of the bush, and the thunderstorm broke, which two events had the natural effect of scattering the damsels in all directions, screaming and tumbling over each other. The poet winds up his story by the remark, that he was so engaged watching them that he got drenched with the rain. This is a slight enough motive, but it seems to be more the work of a poet than of the somewhat inane imitator of Boccaccio.

Of Gudio Cavalcanti we know more, and principally through the fact that he was one of Dante's closest friends. In one of the most offensively personal passages in the Inferno, Dante represents this man's father as coming up through a trap-door in the ground —one of many round about which his companion remarks "are different in degrees of heat"—and asking after his son. Dante's reply to his enquiry is interesting. It will be remembered that his guide through these regions was the shade of Virgil. His reply to old Cavalcanti is this—

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"Not of myself I come,
Through him who there expects me, through this clime
Conducted, whom, perchance, Guido thy son
Held in contempt."[1]

This would seem to infer that Guido Cavalcanti had a contempt for the Muses. He seems indeed to have been more of a philosopher than a poet. Born of a noble family in Florence, he died there on his return from exile in 1300, in the same year as Cimabue the painter. Many writers have given him testimonials of high character. He is said to have been of a philosophical disposition, brave and courteous, but much addicted to solitude and study. He wrote sonnets and canzoni, one of the latter on earthly love being very highly thought of. Many of his sonnets have been translated by Rossetti, and we can judge that his friendship with Dante must have been a mutual gratification.

Perhaps a more interesting man than either of the preceding was Cino da Pistoia, also a friend of Dante. In one way at least he is remarkable—he was a poet and a lawyer. Cino was born in Pistoia in 1270, and died in 1336. One interesting canzone of his on the death of Dante exists in the library of San Marco. One of his critics says that his poetry sweetened the harshness of the Italian tongue. Cino is interesting in another respect. Not only was he the friend of Dante, but he was also the model which Petrarch imitated. In this connection Sismondi says, "he, perhaps, did his imitator as much injury by his refinement and affectation as he

1 Inf. v. 60, Cary's transl.

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benefited him by the example of his pure and harmonious style."

We have now entered on the period which I noticed at the outset as lying between the circle of Dante and the circle of Lorenzo de Medici. The poets during this period are countless in number, but there is a lack of great names. One great reason for this is evident. The revival of learning had set in with full force. Men all over Europe, but especially in Italy, were engaged in the earnest collection of ancient manuscripts, and the diligent copying of them. Too much praise can scarcely be given to that race of noble enthusiasts who rescued from a sleep that might readily have merged into death the priceless literatures of Greece and Rome, and we can scarcely complain if now and then a century or so is given to preserving the past rather than adding to the present. Of the numerous poets who kept alive the sacred flame during this period I can only speak of a few.

During the period between Petrarch and Lorenzo de Medici, we find one or two genuine poets claiming attention. Notable among these, were the two Buonaccorsi da Montemagno. These were two poets connected with each other in the relationship of uncle and nephew. They were born in Pistoia. The uncle was a friend of Petrarch's, and was Gonfalonier in his native place, in 1364. They both, of course, wrote sonnets, and their philosophy was Platonic. There is great sweetness, and more of natural charm in their poetry than is usual among Petrarch's imitators. I am unable to say whether the following sonnet is by the uncle or the

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nephew, but that is of little consequence, when we find in it something more human and picturesque than the infinite subtleties of the master :—

" Here amid violets, and fresh spring flowers,
Breathe the low winds of love, and zephyrs play.
Here there are gentle groves of leafy bay,
Where dewy clouds let fall their gentle showers,
Dear, gladsome woods, wherein the air of love
Woos from my happy heart its secret dreams,
And ye, oh wandering and silent streams,
Whose lucent deeps might tempt the thirst of Jove;
How marvellous the change since here I strayed,
And learnt to play a newer, better part,
When I had bound around me thy sweet chain,—
To fly were death; for here, in this soft shade,
The amorous air so satisfies my heart,
It doth my breath renew—my life sustain."

Fazio de' Uberti, who was born in Florence, and died about 1400, deserves mention, but little else, for his poem of " Il Dittamondo," which was designed to do for earth what Dante had done for the world beyond. He was not successful in this.

Three poetesses must not be passed over. Ortensia di Guglielmo was a lady of Fabbriano, who flourished in Petrarch's time, and, of course, wrote sonnets. Rubbi, in his brief notice of her, says, " Her literary style outshone her period and her sex." Ginstina Lievi Perotti was a lady of noble family, in Sassoferrato. Not only did she write sonnets, but is said to have had the high honour of having sonnets in reply written to her by Petrarch himself. Livia del Chiavello was the wife of a gentleman of Fabbriano, and also wrote sonnets, but her poetical powers are called in question by Tiraboschi.

Every one knows the story of the rise of the Medici,

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and of Florence along with them—how the city, which had been distracted and torn by faction after faction, and one obscure quarrel with a neighbour after another, gradually began to consolidate itself under its merchant princes, and, though still warlike, and by no means enjoying even internal tranquillity, still contrived to win for itself an almost unique position in history. Florence became the Metropolis of the Renascence, and when we think what that means, we will be inclined to consider as one of the most interesting spots of earth's surface the home of Cosmo and Lorenzo, of Brunelleschi, of Politian, Pulci, and Michael Angelo. These are only a very few of the great names that crowd upon our ears as we arrive at the golden age of the new learning.

There is one class of authors which it seems proper to mention here, namely, the Italians who wrote Latin verse. I have called it "Latin verse" advisedly, for it is only here and there in the total mass that we see a faint trace of poetry. With the exception of the Eclogues of Boccaccio, and some of the smaller poems of Flaminius or Folengo, there is really little to reward the labour of digging for it. The occurrence, however, of this lyrical outburst in the classic tongue, is one of the most marked features of the Renascence. It seemed to spread like a modern fashion or an ancient plague. Popes, Cardinals, doctors of medicine, ambassadors, theologians, philologists, and princes, were everywhere smitten with the desire to express their thoughts in the language of Virgil, Ovid, or Catullus. That they fell below their great antetypes is not surprising, but that

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they should have continued with such diligence to perpetuate their own mediocrity is somewhat astonishing, when we know that around them lay the almost untrodden fields of native poetry, and, waiting for new masters, the unexhausted music of Tuscan song. Petrarch himself was one of the most voluminous of Latin writers. His principal poem of this class was entitled "Africa." I had at one time the intention of beginning to read that poem, but I came upon a passage in Sismondi, where he says, "The style is inflated, and the subject so devoid of interest, and so exceedingly dull, as absolutely to prevent the perusal of the work." I have not read Petrarch's "Africa."

I should like to quote one little poem, by Nicodemo Folengo, of Mantua, which seems to me to have something of the true ring about it, although that may be indistinguishable in my humble translation. It is addressed to a lady of the name of Serena.

"Like Spring's first violets in woodland glades,
Or lilies freshly spread at dawn of day;
Like wilding mint, or thyme, on level meads,
Or crocus wherewithal the young winds play;
Like a rich vestment, dyed with scarlet spice
That steals from broken jars in rose-red flow;
Like storax thrown on flames of sacrifice,
Such secrets as th' anointing sages know,
Of berries from the rare Assyrian tree—
So sweet, my lady, is thy sigh to me."

In dealing for a little with the poets who wrote in Latin, I must disclaim any intentions of learned criticism I do not mean to speak of Latinity, or of metre. I am not to be lured into philosophical speculations, or historical parallels; my sole intention is to pluck, at

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random, blossoms, here and there, from the nooks and corners of a vast garden, to see, in short, if there be not some *poetry*—apart from the language in which it is expressed—that is worthy of a wider audience than the ear of a scholar here and there.

Few men, perhaps, deserve better of literature than the Dutch philologist, Janus Gruter, who was born in 1560, and died in 1627. This man, who was educated at Cambridge till the age of 19, became, afterwards, a professor at Heidelberg, and, with a marvellous industry, collected together in a series of volumes, not the whole, certainly, but a vast mass of the neo-classic poetry of his own and the preceding age. My present object, of course, is only to speak of the neo-classic poets of Italy, but Gruter's enthusiasm did not confine itself to these. Besides his "Delitiae CC Poetarum Italorum," he published similar volumes, containing the works of French, German, and Belgian poets. To other men is due the same meed of praise for the collections of this kind we possess, notably the "Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum."

These little square octavos, with their thin, faded leaves, and clear, but antique, type, form the most delightful companions. True it is, that many pages have to be turned over, with regret, for the worthlessness, or dullness, of their contents; nevertheless, we love them still, and ere we have read far, it cannot be but that something of the strength and fire of that great age enters into our souls, and we feel not only the interest of historical curiosity, but something of the love that binds men together in time as well as in space—the

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humanism of the modern world.

It is, indeed, a strange world of imagination into which these poets introduce us. There is Christianity, with its pious hymns, and venerable narratives; there is contemporary history, with its wars by land and sea, its hopes, fears, and congratulations; and there is,—perhaps, more conspicuous than either of these,—the strange element of revived paganism, not wholly revived, perhaps, but muttering and singing its old hymns and songs, celebrating its Pan and its Bacchus, and speaking a language from which the fervour of faith has gone, but which is still warm with a glow of sympathy as it flows from these modern lips. It would be marvellous if there were no poetry in all this. There are, in fact, two elements of poetry present—the love of the beautiful old life that had perished, and the strong emotions, which sprang from the chances, and changes, of a great crisis in the history of the world. The first gives rise to what seems an inferior form of the art, namely, ceaseless imitation of ancient poets. The latter produces many beauties that are fresh and true, but is marred every here and there by the follies, the affectations, the bitter jealousies, and garish adulations, inseparable to the daily life of the period.

Bembo, Navagero, Politiano, Pontano, Sannazaro, Vida—these are the great names in this department of literature, but any criticism of their works would demand a far more elaborate treatment than I can offer.

Hieronymus Amaltheus, who was born at Oderzo, in 1506, and became professor of medicine and morals in the University of Padua, is one of the sweetest of the

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neo-Latin singers. He seems to have been a man of cultivated mind, and affectionate disposition, and his poetry was appreciated to the full in his own day. The following lines are written on the departure of a friend :—

" Adieu, oh sun-lit hills ; farewell,
The shady valley's copse and dell ;
Far from your haunts he goes, alas !
No more, oh wretched Iolas,
These meadows fragrant thoul't behold,
With marjoram and marigold ;
No more, oh wretched Iolas,
Reclining on the deep green grass,
Thoul't watch the young kine fight, no more,
Lulled by the streamlet's rush and roar,
Wilt thou a slumber sweet invoke
From gentle breeze or whispering oak.
Far must thou sail, where south winds sweep
Athwart the monster-haunted deep,
Where every hour, above, beneath,
There looms the shade of imminent Death.
Oh foolish Iolas, spare our woe !
For I must follow thee, although
To furthest founts of Nile I go,
Or where will darkly frown on us
Inhospitable Caucasus.
Adieu, oh sun-lit hills, farewell,
The shady valley's copse and dell."

The rules for the living of a "settled, sweet, epicurean life," have, perhaps, never been more tersely, or clearly, laid down, than in the words of Petrus Crinitus or Riccio, a disciple of Politian, and friend of Mirandula, born about the year 1465. This man seems to have been permeated with the Horatian philosophy of tranquil enjoyment, and his scheme of happiness is summed up in an address "To Avitus on a Quiet Life."

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"If thou wouldst fain be happy, friend,
And pass thy days in ease and rest,
Fear not what shifting fate may send,
Meet even Death with tranquil breast.
Fly from the splendours of the great
As from a plague, and cultivate
A life of quiet liberty,
Where restfulness with pleasure blends,
Light laughter, grateful company,
And simple faith, and candid friends;
Ah, cast all luxury behind,
And sloth, and cares that will not sleep,
And year by year, a blossoming mind
Within a vigorous body keep.
Oh, happy he who can such rest maintain,
Nor give himself, nor cause another, pain."

We have here a phrase, borrowed from the antique, but with new life added to it. The old "mens sana in corpore sano" becomes, on the lips of the Renascence poet—"in vigenti corpore vigeant sensus." It is, perhaps, not too fanciful to find in this change, a symptom of the altered world. The worn-out Roman prayed only for health and sanity; the later Italian, with his hot blood, and swift intellect, demands more. A great age is but beginning, and mind and body must, in the newer sunlight, grow like a growing tree, with a stem strong against storms, and branches that burst all over into blossom.

Among the poets of love in this collection, and they are many, no one shows more laboured delight in his subject than Hieronymus Angerianus, a Neapolitan of the sixteenth century. Under the title of "Erotopægnion," or Love-play, he wrote a series of nearly two hundred short poems, all having for their subject the beauties of his mistress, Caelia, and the power of his own passion for her. The work was first printed at

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Naples, in 1520, and subsequently conjoined with the similar productions of Marullus and Secundus. While there is, undoubtedly, something to admire, there is much in these poems which fails to win our sympathy. There are endless figures, and similes, the fruit of a cultivated, but shallow, imagination. Caelia is constantly being mistaken for Venus. When Caelia speaks, love speaks; when Caelia smiles, love smiles, &c., &c. In one poem, the poet gravely announces that there are now two Venuses, ten Muses, two Dianas, and four Graces, each addition having been made, of course, in the form of Caelia. There is but one result, however, when love poetry ceases to be irrepressible, and becomes constructive. As there is no limit to its range, so the poetical artificer knows not when to stop; he loses the power of selection, which is one of the gifts of emotion, and his work becomes weak, wearisome, and barren. This has happened again and again in literature. The poets' "singing robes" are changed for a dress of fringes and furbelows, stiffened with buckram, and loaded with jewels of paste.

In strong contrast to all this, I cannot do better than here introduce the name of H. Aleandrus, Cardinal and poet. He was born at Motta, in the year 1480, was Papal Nuncio to Germany, and took part in the Diet of Worms. There is only one poem of his given in Gruter's collection, but it is one which has been translated into many languages. The admiration bestowed on it is, we think, fully deserved. There is a quiet beauty, a staid earnestness of affection, in the flowing lines, which is in happy contrast to many of the

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productions of the time. And it is scarcely necessary to say that there are beauties in the original which I have striven, in vain, to preserve. The poet has sent a gift to Julius, and Neaera, the young son and daughter of his late benefactor, and with the gift come these lines :—

" These mirrors, ivory combs, nets wrought with gold,
I send to thee, good Julius, and to thee,
Gentle Neaera—I, who was of old
Your father's dearest friend—from o'er the sea.
When night steals up from ocean, in these bands
Tie up your ruddy locks, sweet boy and girl;
At sunrise with these white combs in your hands,
Sweet girl and boy, smooth out each golden curl.
These glasses have a double use; if fair
Your form appear in them, oh make your heart
As lovely; should a fault or spot be there,
A spotless soul will brighten every part.
No need for these grave words if he had lived;
Alas!—a buried hope to you and me!
Me, whom the Fates of parents twain deprived,
They rob now of your father's charity.
But since he lives no more, you, children, stand
To me, as I to him, and willingly
To his own little ones I stretch the hand
I fain would clasp in his—oh, sweet to me
If, by heaven's will, this little offering paid,
Be not ungrateful to your father's shade.

Nothing is more pleasing in the history of letters than to find here and there a father and son, both poets, and at the same time so free from the rivalry of their kind as to be helpful to each other and full of a mutual admiration which is strengthened by natural affection. Such was the case in the instance of the poets who go under the name of Flaminius. This name was assumed by the father, when he became a member of the Venetian Academy, in place of his family name of Zarabbini de

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Cotignola. The history of these two poets presents a very interesting picture of their times and shows many lovable features which one is glad to make the most of in a society which we know to have been so lacking in the tenderer and better sentiments.

Io. Antonius Flaminius was born at Imola in 1464. In his twenty-first year he was Professor of Belles-lettres at Seravalla, and after many changes of residence and many misfortunes brought about by the ceaseless wars around him, settled at Bologna, where he died in 1536. In 1498, a son was born to him at Seravalla, whose education he took entirely into his own hands, with the result that the young Flaminius at an early age produced poems which more than rivalled those of his father. The old man, whose verses had more of the scholar's diligence than the poet's fire about them, welcomed with delight the growing genius of his son, and a pretty story is told of how he introduced the lad to the most august literary patron in Italy. When the boy was about 16 years of age, his father, who wished to lay some poetical tribute at the feet of the Pope, employed his son as his ambassador and insisted on adding to the literary collection some of the youth's own productions. Leo X. was extremely pleased with young Flaminius, and confided him to the care of Raphaël Brandolini, an orator resident in the Vatican. The great Pope is said to have addressed him in words which must have sounded very sweet to the boy's ears from the lips of such a patron, "Macte nova virtute, puer, sic itur ad astra." Another interesting incident in his career was the visit of Flaminius to Naples, expressly to see

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Sannazaro the great head of the Neapolitan school of poetry, the author of the sacred epic, "De Partu Virginis," the inventor of Arcadia. Sannazaro, then in his 56th year, appears to have impressed very strongly the amiable young poet in whose verse there is throughout a feeling of delight in external nature, and in the pleasures of simple, bucolic life. It is unnecessary to trace the career of Flaminius farther than to mention that he was offered and refused an office in connection with the Council of Trent, and that the patron to whom he appears most grateful was Alexander Farnese, afterwards Pope Paul III., who restored to him a small estate, which he seems to have greatly prized and of which he had been unjustly deprived. He died at Rome in 1550.

> Mihi villula carior superbis
> Regum liminibus.

These words are typical of the gentle, domestic nature of the man—a peaceful home and a country life seemed to him the best gift of the gods. His principal works consisted of translations of the Psalms into Latin verse, and many books of "Carmina" on divine and other subjects. Those in Gruter's collection are of the lighter order.

Among the Hymns of Flaminius is one to Aurora, which seems to me to contain many beauties, and which no doubt loses many of them in translation. The joy in light and life which it displays is perhaps embodied once for all as a characteristic of Flaminius in the expression, "me juvet semper bona lux."

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HYMN TO AURORA.

Aurora from the farthest East
Comes, in her dewy chariot drawn,
Bearing within her rosy breast
The white, bright Dawn.

Away, pale shades! To Orcus flee,
Whose ghostly faces, full of woe
And dire dreams have affrighted me
The long night through.

Boy, bring my lyre, and lightly spread
Flowers, while I sing, about my hearth.
Hail! Thou whose light hath gladdened
The gloom-wrapt earth.

For thee these gentle violets lie,
These baskets of sweet herbs; ah see
The breeze that lifts their fragrance high
Bears it to thee.

And let it carry prayers and praise,
Voice of my suppliant muse, outpoured,
Who hath ere now in lowly phrase
Ofttimes adored.

Ah, who can sing thy glorious light,
Bountiful Mother of the Day,
Who 'mong th' immortals art more bright,
More fair than they.

For when thy face lights heaven's wide halls,
'Gainst thee what beauty can avail?
The dim stars set, and the moon falls
Conquered and pale.

Without thee, in eternal night
All life would lie entombed and blind,
No hue on all the earth; a blight
Clouding the mind.

Thou raisest sleep from our dull eyes,
Death's image, and thou summonest
Men to their various toils, who rise
Glad from their rest.

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The busy streets awake. The steers,
Strong-limbed, put on their morning yoke,
The hind around him, joyful, hears
His gathering flock.

Sadly the lover stays his lute,
And leaves his mistress's casement, slow,
Sighing towards thee, with lingering foot,
And loth to go.

But, tho' he loves his twilight lawn,
Give me the glad light! Goddess, hear,
Oh may I live to love the dawn
For many a year.

But lest I exhaust your patience, I must turn from these Latin versifiers.

In Lorenzo de Medici, we see a prince, one of the ablest men who ever lived, dwelling in the most splendid state, in a city which owed much of its greatness to him, and his fathers; around him were gathered an innumerable company of poets, and painters, flushed with the new impulses of renascent art. His gardens were enriched with the priceless sculptures of antiquity; his libraries were overflowing with books and manuscripts, which had been gathered out of the mediæval darkness; and on his own lips alternated the maxims of neo-Platonism, and the gay songs of the street carnival. For Lorenzo was not only a Maecenas. He was himself a poet, and one of the ablest of his time. His early sonnets, of which there are nearly two hundred, his Canzone and Madrigals would of themselves have won him a considerable fame. But there are also works of greater moment from his hand. "L'Ambra," and "La Nencia," are pastoral poems of some length and

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importance. His time seemed to have been, to a great extent, occupied by the amusements of the people. These amusements, in accordance with the gay, careless, pleasure-seeking temperament of the Italians, took the form of public dances, and processions in the streets. For these occasions, Lorenzo wrote many songs and interludes, taking an enthusiastic interest in such matters, and, it is said, not unfrequently joining in the dance himself. Sacred representations, too, formed an important part of such festivals, and Lorenzo, in this department also, was prominent. "La Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo," is a sacred drama, of considerable bulk and importance. There are thirty-three characters represented, and the drama is written in the ottava rima. A great number of hymns prove that Lorenzo had a strongly pious side to his character, which fact, but for these, one would be inclined to doubt.

One of the greatest of the poets surrounding Lorenzo was Angelo Poliziano. This man was principally celebrated for his prodigious learning. His works, in Latin, equal in bulk, if they do not exceed, those in Italian, and he was an accomplished Greek scholar. Personally, he is said to have been ugly and misshapen, with a very large nose, which was a constant source of amusement to his friends. But when he mounted his professorial platform, and poured forth the burning tide of his eloquence and learning, he carried all hearts away with him, and won the enthusiastic applause of his scholars and contemporaries. His verses on the tournament of Julian de' Medici are among the sweetest

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in all the poetry of Italy—a sweetness and beauty which no translation can convey.

But Politian, with all his perfections, must be looked upon as the poet of an old school. A new departure had taken place in Italian poetry. There had been in Europe, from a remote antiquity, and more definitely since the days of Charlemagne, a certain cluster of poetical ideas, and great thoughts, gathered round the character of the knight of chivalry. As feudalism became established, and as the crusades went on, absorbing all the attention, as well as all the young manhood of Christendom, this feeling of admiration for the knightly character crystallised into speech and song. The Troubadours and Trouveres, the bards of England, and even some of the cloistered monks became enamoured of the theme. A certain atmosphere of magical incantation and superstitious awe was unavoidable at such a period, and was mingled with a fresh and infantile belief in the marvellous. But it remained for the great Italians to form these vague images and incredible tales into definite works of art, and there were two men around Lorenzo who did so almost to perfection. They were Luigi Pulci and Matteo Boiardo. Their great poems were written simultaneously —it is still a question with scholars which was the first to be finished.

Pulci, who was one of the distinguished crowd which filled the halls of Lorenzo's palace, employed a great part of his time in the composition of the "Morgante Maggiore," as he called his great poem. This name is rather a misleading one, as Morgante, although he was

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a giant, plays a very secondary part in the story. Of course it is quite impossible, without reading the poems themselves, to form any conception of their character or poetical power; and this you may wish to be excused from doing when I remind you that the "Morgante" consists of 28 cantos, each of from 200 to 300 stanzas. I cannot boast of an intimate knowledge of the poems of Pulci and his fellow romancers, but I may remark, in a general way, that the story is a wild and strange one, full of the most marvellous adventures and the most picturesque freaks of the imagination. Charlemagne and his Paladins form the "dramatis personæ," and the scene changes with bewildering rapidity from one end of Europe to the other. There is one conspicuous blemish which detracts somewhat from the purely poetical character of the work, and that is a tendency to burlesque and broad comedy, which shows Pulci to have been more a man of society and the world than is wholly consistent with the untrammelled cultivation of high art.

In his great rival Boiardo, however, we find a truer poet. The "Orlando Innamorato" is a work of the very highest poetical power. The subject is somewhat similar to that of "Morgante"—the adventures of the Paladins, but the story is told with such a richness of colouring and freshness of feeling that we feel ourselves at once in a new atmosphere. We are sensible throughout of the working of a strong imagination, lit with all the lights of poetical passion, and, through it all, an intense sense of the delight with which it was written. There is sunshine in every stanza. This poem had the

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remarkable fate of being almost re-written by another hand at a slightly later period. The poet Berni undertook this remodelling, and it will no doubt be long a question among critics whether he has improved the original or spoilt it. Another interest attaching to this poem is that it was the main source from which Ariosto drew his inspiration in the "Orlando Furioso"—in fact, the one is a continuation of the other. It is also referred to by Milton in the "Paradise Regained."

I come now to speak a few words of one who, if not the greatest, is perhaps the best known of all the poets of Italy—I mean Lodovico Ariosto.

Ariosto was born in 1474 at the Castle of Reggio in Lombardy. Patronage was bestowed on him by the great family of d'Este at Ferrara, and under it he became Governor of Graffignana. Besides being the author of comedies, Ariosto wrote in almost every form of poetical composition. From his hand we have sonnets, madrigals, canzoni, capitoli, eclogues, and satires. Of these minor compositions it is scarcely necessary to speak, as they are all overshadowed by his great work, the chivalrous romance of "Orlando Furioso." This, as I have said, is really a continuation of Boiardo's poem. In the one, Orlando is in love, in the second he goes mad outright. It is said that Ariosto began to write some stanzas merely for his own amusement, and that the favourable reception of these fragments among his friends induced him to continue. However this may be, the completed work is one of the masterpieces of European literature. There is perhaps less broad humour than in Pulci, there is less

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of the open freshness and young delight of Boiardo, but there is that indescribable quality which we recognize as art, that beauty and satisfaction which can only be produced by masterly and finished workmanship Every stanza is like a jewel, and every canto like a necklace of gems. Ariosto takes up the story where Boiardo had left it at the Siege of Paris. It is impossible, as in the case of the other poems of this description, to give any idea of the whole by quoting passages, as the story, intricate as it is, hangs together closely, and each incident is interwoven and dependent on some other. Here and there we come upon shorter stories related by various characters, and these episodes form some of the most beautiful passages in the whole. Many of them are to be found elsewhere, for though this was an age in which the narrative, or novelistic instinct, was peculiarly strong, it was not an age of great original inventions. Through all the Italian novelists, Boccaccio, Malespini, Sacchetti, and many others, nothing strikes us so forcibly as the constant survival of certain stories, slightly varied in form but similar in plot and point. It is generally also to be noted that these stories have their origin very far back in the history of literature, so far indeed as almost to make the distance immeasurable. Through Eastern, Grecian, Roman, Arabian civilization, these narrative types survived and probably will survive for all time to come. But this is a region of enquiry which, however interesting, is somewhat apart from my present purpose.

The next great poem of the same school is of course the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Torquato Tasso. The

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poet was born in 1544, and the story of his life was a very sad one. Here the positions of author and subject were reversed, for while the poem was grave, and high, and beautiful, it was the poet who went mad. This derangement was caused by many vicissitudes which overtook him, but it fortunately occurred only towards the close of his career, when his work had been accomplished. Perhaps I could use no higher language of praise with regard to the "Jerusalem Delivered" than by quoting the opinion of Hallam. "In the variety of occurrences," that critic says, "the change of scenes and images, and of the trains of sentiment connected with them in the reader's mind, we cannot place the 'Iliad' on a level with the 'Jerusalem.' And again, by the manifest unity of subject, and by the continuance of the crusading army before the walls of Jerusalem, the poem of Tasso has a coherence and singleness which is wanting to that of Virgil." [1]

This surely is the highest praise which could well be bestowed, and yet it is perhaps doubtful whether it is altogether deserved. I do not know that the poem of Tasso has ever taken a place in men's minds above, or even alongside the great epics of antiquity. There are no douht qualities in them which are not to be found in the "Jerusalem"—vital qualities which elude criticism and which overturn our most carefully drawn comparisons.

The quality of Tasso's imagination is that of sombre beauty, rich in colouring, fertile in the invention of form and incident, lovely and triumphant, yet with a

1 Lit. of Europe, xiv., 21.

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sad strain in it that recalls the gloomy, introspective and passionate nature of the poet. These four poems, the "Morgante Maggiore" of Pulci, the "Orlando Innamorato" of Boiardo, the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto and the "Gerusalemme Liberata" of Tasso, form together a monument such as few literatures, or none, have succeeded in raising, and, like many other monuments whose prime is past and gone, they have formed a store-house of material from which poet after poet, and nation after nation have drawn for themselves fragments of beauty to adorn their later fabrics, and to kindle on alien shores the light of renascent Italy. [1]

I cannot follow, as I would wish to do, the stream of Italian poetry further. My time and your patience alike forbid it, but I may be allowed to say that it is not for want of appreciation that I am compelled to omit such names as Bembo, Michael Angelo, Boccaccio, Castiglione, Pontanus, Chiabrera, and many others.

And now one word before closing on the influence of Italian poetry on that of other countries.

The mutual intercourse of France and Italy renders it somewhat difficult to trace any precise passage of ideas from one country to the other, but it may be confidently said that if the Italians owed the subject

1 There are in Italian literature, a number of smaller poems of the same outward form as the greater works, but of much slighter workmanship, and more or less partaking of the nature of burlesque. In one of these, the "Ricciardetto" of Forteguerri, it is curious to come upon a story the scene of which is laid in Aberdeen!

"Io nacqui in Scozia, e la bella Aberdona
Che del gran fiume Dea in riva è posta
Mi diè i natali."

So says a wonderful young woman who appears in the 29th Canto, and proceeds to tell her story.

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matter of their romances in large part to the ancient chronicles and lays of France, they sent in return a wave of new light and great ideas into the northern country, which produced the newer school of poetry there in the sixteenth century—the Augustan Age of Ronsard, and Marot, and Rabelais.

In Spain the influence was more marked, and can be traced almost to two individuals, the poets Boscan and Garcilasso. I cannot say that this influence was altogether for good. The character of the older Spanish lyric poetry was destroyed, and the fineness of the later writer's workmanship scarcely makes good that loss.

It is more interesting, however, to consider our own case. Here we meet with Italian influence almost at the fountain-head. Chaucer, the father of English literature, is supposed to have personally met Petrarch in Padua. Many of his poems and forms of poetry bear the stamp of Italian influence. In Spenser, too, the influence is obvious. The "Faery Queen" is such another poem as the two "Orlandos," only written in English, and perhaps containing more of the spiritual or subjective element than is perceived in the fruits of the Italian mind, engrossed as it was with outward form and colour, without much inclination for reflection or the perfection of moral purposes.

It is sufficient to mention the names of some of Shakespeare's plays to immediately remind the student of literature of the rich source from which their material at least was derived. The stories of "Measure for Measure," "Much Ado about Nothing," "Romeo and Juliet," "All's Well that Ends Well," and "Othello,"

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are to be found among the Italian novelists. Of Milton it will be sufficient to note his "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" as distinctly Italian in type, and to remember his early travels in the lands of Dante and Petrarch.

I should like, in conclusion, to say something, in a general way, of the whole period I have been reviewing. It seems to me that we can best understand that period if we attempt to draw a line, which it is always difficult to draw, but which is nevertheless a very broad one, although its course is often tortuous. I mean the line which separates literature from poetry. We have here a mass of literature, we have one or two instances of poetry. The distinction is one which no two people will probably agree upon, so to put it on as broad a basis as possible, I shall call it the distinction between the learning, the general culture, and the respectable accomplishments which find their expression in written speech, and that higher faculty which contains all the elemental emotion, all the keen æsthetic delights and revelations which are permitted to humanity, and which compels its expression with an impulse which is genius in splendours of colour, in majesty of form, in music that bewitches, or in words that burn. In this view I fear that we should have to make one great leap from Dante to Politian. For the Trecentisti, with perhaps the exception of Petrarch, sink below the line I have drawn, and it is not till the time of Lorenzo that we find poetry properly so called. For this result I think the sonnet is largely to be blamed. That form of verse is a difficult and artificial one. It almost of necessity

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cramps and confines the poet's thoughts, and worse still leads by its poverty of rhyme to the suggestion of ideas which are irrelevant and far-fetched. It breeds conceits and subtleties and induces general obscurity, which is always paralysing to the faculties which find their satisfaction in the power of simple beauty. But when we have arrived at the time of the Medici there is scarcely a man who sinks below the line of high art. It is one continuous baze of splendour, like the Elizabethian period in our annals, or the beginning of the present century, which saw living together Burns, and Wordsworth, and Byron, and Coleridge, and Keats, and Scott.

But in interest it exceeds even these, for a long reign of internal peace and prosperity fostered the one, the subsidence of a world storm called for the other, but the Renascence rose of its own force out of the blackness of darkness, and made all the others possible.

The present age seems to some to be one of those pauses between the acts which must, no doubt, occur. But we have one or two great names amongst us still, and I do not fear that our national life will ever lose that reverent spirit and truthfulness of purpose which the presence and pursuit of high art fosters and cherishes, or that there will ever come a time when there will be no great voice left to tell us that

> "Not in entire forgetfulness,
> Nor yet in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home."

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AN ELIZABETHAN "ENDYMION"

THE use of the title "Endymion" by modern writers such as Keats and Longfellow, not to speak of Lord Beaconsfield, suggests a backward glance over English literature with a view to noting when and where it has been employed before. Keats may be said to live in his "Endymion." It was the first, and will always be the most typical work of his genius. "Hyperion" is more stately and finished in its verse, many of his odes are more directly human in their interest, but the rich, almost over-sweet music of "Endymion," with its gorgeous imagery and exquisite descriptive power, will keep its author's fame green for ever.

Besides these modern and well-known works, there is an "Endimion" of much older date, which we venture to say has had few readers of late; and a glance at this, as a typical work of its class and time, may not be uninteresting. Almost everybody has heard of John Lilly, the author of "Euphues," the sweet-spoken playwright whose stilted, yet elegant eloquence became "the rage" among the courtiers of Queen Elizabeth. Born probably in the same year as Edmund Spenser, Lilly, after passing through Oxford, where he took his master's degree in 1575, became a well-known writer of his time. Besides "Euphues" he wrote many dramas,

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the chief among which are "Campaspe," "Sapho and Phao," "Endimion," "Mother Bombie" and "Galathea."

Lilly's "Endimion" bears the date 1591, and was written in all probability when its author was in the prime of his literary power. Its original title was as follows: "Endimion, the Man in the Moone, play'd before the Queen's Majestie at Greenwich on Candlemas day at night, by the chyldren of Paules."

The first scene of the first act opens with a duologue between Endimion and his friend Eumenides. The style is that of the author of "Euphues," yet there is a certain grace and poetic cadence in the high-flown sentences which is very quaint and pleasing. Endimion avows to his friend the strange passion which has taken possession of his heart, and, notwithstanding Eumenides' remonstrances (with which the reader cannot help sympathising), goes on to speak of the beauty and perfectness of his "faire Cynthia." Taunted with the undeniable fact of her changeableness, he breaks into a rhapsody in which he speaks of her as "getting youth by years, and never decaying beautie by time; whose faire face, neither the summer's blaze can scorch, nor winter's blast chap, nor the numbering of years breed altering of colours." This reminds one inevitably of the opening of the third book of Keats' poem, where the moon is apostrophised in richer and less formal language—

> "The sleeping kine
> Couched in thy brightness, dream of fields divine;
> Innumerable mountains rise, and rise
> Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes."

Eumenides, who is a person of common-sense, closes the scene by announcing his intention of keeping his

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eye on his bewitched friend. "I will follow him, least in this fancie of the moone he deprive himselfe of the sight of the sunne."

In the second scene two ladies appear, Tellus and Floscula; the former in a state of jealous indignation at the recent infatuation of Endimion, who had been her lover, the latter acting the part of confidant and adviser. The state of mind in which Tellus has been thrown is well expressed by her exclamation—"Loth am I, Endimion, thou shouldst die, because I love the well; and that thou shouldst live it grieveth me, because thou lovest Cynthia too well." She resolves upon enchantment. "Poor Endimion," sighs Floscula, "what traps are laid for thee, because thou honourest one that all the world wondereth at." The reader of this play will not fail to remember the illustrious lady who first listened to it, nor is it to be supposed that Queen Elizabeth failed to appreciate the subtle and musical flatteries of her person and character with which the poet strewed his play so thickly.

Sir Tophas and his page Epiton are introduced engaged in a wit-combat with two rollicking young scamps, the servants respectively of Endimion and Eumenides. Sir Tophas is one of the best characters in the play—and one which was a favourite with the Elizabethan play-wrights. He is a bragging, bombastical knight, a coward and a pedant, waging fierce war against harmless bird and beast, and quoting Latin with every breath. He is the comic character of the piece; and it must be said his humour has not outworn its freshness although cast in a mould which is foreign to our century.

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One of his first remarks has been quoted by Longfellow in the beginning of his "Hyperion." "A poet? what's that?" asks his page, "Dost thou not know what a poet is?" "No." "Why, foole," explains Sir Tophas, "a poet is as much as one should say, a poet." Sir Tophas is armed in ridiculous fashion with a bird bolt for the "ugly beast the blackbird," a musket for the "untamed (or, as the vulgar sort terme it), the wilde mallard," spear and shield, "both neeessary, the one to conquer the other to subdue or overcome the terrible trowt." Sir Tophas is in love. The act closes with an interview between Tellus and Dipsas, a wicked enchantress, who engages to exercise her art on Endimion "so that all his love shall be doubted of, and therefore become desperate," adding, "but this will weare out with time, that treadeth all things downe but truth."

In the next act the magical enthralment of Endimion is completed, but not before a somewhat impassioned scene takes place between him and the indignant Tellus. There is a sweet but monotonous music in the language of this scene which at some moments almost breaks into poetry. Scintilla and Favilla, two ladies of Cynthia's court, are introduced with humorous effect engaged in a woman's quarrel, where both are determined, as usual, to have the last word. Scintilla must be supposed to have given way to tears, for Samias remarks, "A strange sight to see water come out of fire;" and Dare replies poetically, "It is their propertie to carrie in their eyes fire and water, teares and torches, and in their mouthes hony and gall."

Sir Tophas again appears, breathing defiance against

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"The monster *Ovis*," a black sheep, which he intimates his intention of sallying forth to subdue. The ladies chaff Sir Tophas unmercifully, but he will pay them no attention. A curious illustration of contemporary customs and fashions crops out in this scene. "What is that the gentlewoman carrieth in a chaine?" asks Sir Tophas. "Why, it is a squirrill," replies his page. "A squirrill?" is the good knight's exclamation, "O gods, what things are made for money." The learned editor of Lilly's dramas[1], in a note, speaks of a certain "Tapestry of Nancy," whereon a lady is depicted with a squirrel secured to her wrist by a chain. Could Sir Tophas see some of the chatelaines, fans, or parasols, which we meet now-a-days in fashionable promenades or in crowded ball-rooms he might repeat his exclamation with emphasis! So Endimion is put to sleep, and the act closes with a mysterious dumb show while "musique sounds."

It is not till this enchantment has been wrought that Cynthia herself appears upon the scene. She has heard of Endimion's condition, and exhibits an imperious displeasure in her manner which the dramatist may well have drawn from the life. She despatches Eumenides and her lords in all directions to find a cure for the enchantment, and as punishment for an impertinent speech, Tellus is sent to a castle in the desert, "there to remaine and weave." "Shall she worke stories or poetries?" asks Corsites, who has been appointed her jailor. "It skilleth not which," replies the Queen, "go to, in both, for shee shall find examples infinite in

1 Dramatic Works. 2 Vols. 1858.

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either what punishment long tongues have."

A terrible passion has seized on Sir Tophas. He has fallen in love with the witch Dipsas, and is much laughed at for his pains. Meantime Eumenides in his travels to find a cure for Endimion comes upon an old man, Geron, who tells him of an enchanted well, wherein if a faithful lover looks he may have whatever he desires. The first injunction which becomes visible to Eumenides as he gazes into the water is this: "Aske one for all, and but one thing at all." Thereupon a contention rises in the breast of the wandering courtier, for he cannot resolve whether to ask for the fulfilment of Cynthia's command and the recovery of his friend, or for the smiles of his sweetheart Lemele, with whom he is passionately in love. It is a case of Love *versus* Friendship, but to the honour of Eumenides unselfish friendship conquers, and the secret is revealed. In oracular phrase it is mysteriously intimated that if Cynthia will but kiss Endimion he will be restored to consciousness, "else never."

Further love affairs now complicate the action of the play. Corsites has become fascinated by his fair captive, who piteously exclaims, "I have no play-fellow but fancy, being barred of all company I must question with myselfe and make my thoughts my friends." She sets Corsites, in order to be rid of him, to a task beyond his power, namely, to remove Endimion from where he sleeps "on the lunarie bauk" and conceal him in some obscure cave. A comic interlude occurs between the waggish pages and the watch, which reminds us forcibly of "Much ado about Nothing." Corsites, failing in

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his endeavour to raise Endimion from his enchanted couch, falls powerless by his side, and is attacked by a playful troupe of fairies, who sing a song which again brings "The Merry Wives of Windsor" to mind. Cynthia again appears, accompanied by no less persons than Pythagoras and Gyptes, "philosophers," and a learned discussion ensues on Endimion's condition.

In the last act the play is somewhat summarily wound up. The chief scene is that in which Cynthia consents to procure Endimion's release by kissing him, upon which he begins to stir and slowly awakes to life. His gradual return to consciousness after an oblivion of forty years, with all its concomitant changes and surprises, is finely told. "Thy name I do remember by the sound," he says vaguely to Eumenides, "but thy favour I doe not yet call to mind; only divine Cynthia, to whom time, fortune, destinie, and death are subject, I see and remember; and in all humilitie I regard and reverence." "Am I," he says again, "that Endimion who was wont in court to lead my life; and in joists, turneys, and armes, to exercise my youth. Am I that Endimion?" This whole scene, and the telling of his dream, is perhaps the finest in the play. Unfortunate Sir Tophas discovers that his beloved Dipsas has a husband, and is finally paired off with her maid Bagoa. Tellus having made a full confession, is united to her lover Corsites, Dipsas is reconciled to her old husband Geron, Eumenides is rewarded with the hand of Semele, and Cynthia from her serene height bestows her smile upon Endimion, whose youth has been restored.

So ends this drama—not a great one, or one which

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displays much of the passions and motives of humanity, but which still, through its mythological and fanciful dress, betrays the work of a man of the world who had a keen eye for the follies of his time, and a more than common power of creative imagination. *Tempora mutantur*, and few will now be found who care to read or find themselves in the mood to enjoy the airy fancies and antique jests of smooth-tongued John Lilly, but no one will deny him a prominent and peculiar place in English literature.

THE END.

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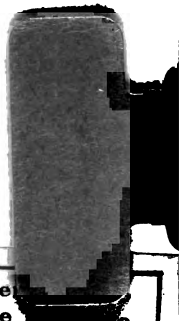

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